

LABELS WE LOVE SPECIAL ISSUE! SUB POP, VP, FEEDLITY, 4LUX, AND MORE!

XLR8R

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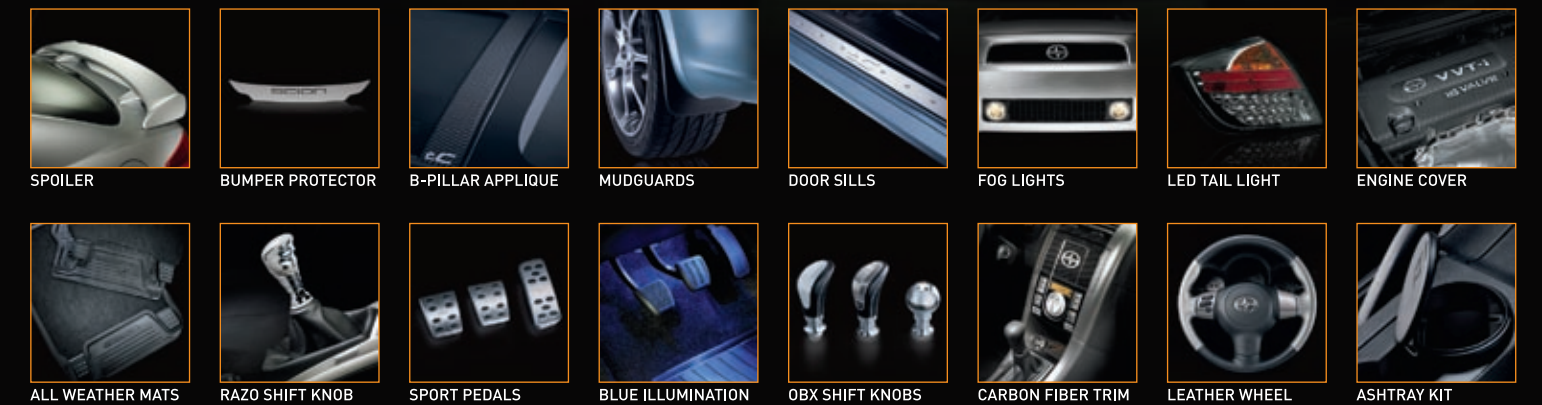
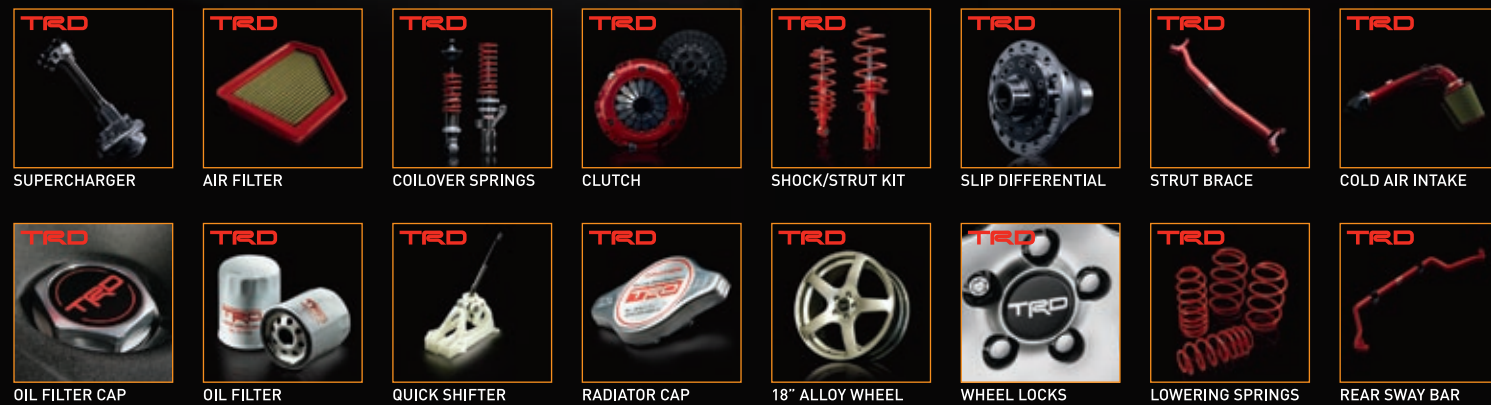
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what moves you

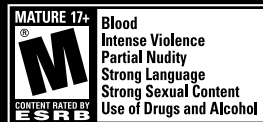
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LYKKE LI, PHOTOGRAPHED IN NYC BY ANDY EISBERG

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Ed's Rant: Working Up a Sweat



While we toil away, office dog Foxy is rollin', rollin' down the river...

It's late summer and we're hot. We're hot to trot, we're hot in the city tonight, we're hot to death, and on top of that we are a hot mess (even Christian Siriano agrees). But in between puzzling over zen koans like "Air-conditioning or windows rolled down?" and "Fruit-A-Freeze or Chipwich?," we've also been busy asking ourselves what's really hot.

The first and most obvious answer is Flying Lotus. Our proximity to Los Angeles has always kept us up close and personal with L.A.'s avant-garde beatmakers—from Daedelus to Dntel, DJ Nobody to Mr. Madlib—so we've had our ears on Alice Coltrane's great-nephew almost since he picked up that mouse and started to wail. Two albums in—and with his Brainfeeder label shaping up nicely—summer seemed the perfect time to get down with this San Fernando Valley traveler of time and space. FlyLo's shifty hits scratch that itch for something a little bit hip-hop, a little bit electronic, and a little bit soul that we need to soundtrack the hazy, brain-melting Indian summer days.

Interrupting those pleasantly loopy, loping thought patterns, I must point out that this issue is our annual Labels We Love special, and plenty of thought went into which imprints have been spicing up the lives of our MP3 players and boomboxes since last August. For our seventh installment of this love-in, we've listed an (almost) all-new group of music curators, from rangy Scottish upstarts Dress 2 Sweat to long-haul techno touts Traum, and profiled some artists-to-watch from each. Writer Jesse Serwer traveled to Jamaica (Queens, that is) to meet up with Miss Pat Chin, the 70-something music maven who continues to preside over VP

Records' reggae/dancehall empire, while Ken Taylor talked digital-versus-analog affairs with the dudes from Sub Pop (happy 20th birthday!) and RCRD LBL.

Some issues have a darker, more somber vibe, but this one just *feels* sunny, what with the tropical punk of Tetine and the uptempo rhythms of dancehall dons Daseca. DJ Godfather tells you how to rock that afterparty just right with his Serato tips, and Chicago's Kid Static purveys his upbeat hip-hop in between leaping off buildings. Some info on train-hopping culture and a toothsome illustration from Bang Gang 12-inches round out the feeling that there's still bounce in the step of this long, searing summer.

And if that's not enough to make you say, "*Dammnnnn*, that's hot," have you noticed our good looks? Every five months from here on out we are featuring an exclusive header typeface, designed just for us by a slew of your new favorite font masters. (Currently, we're running some triangles-and-crosshairs magic from Yego Moravia.) You might also notice a swift redesign of our record reviews section this issue, where you'll find the real deal on new albums from John Tejada, Ratatat, and CSS. (Voracious fans and work time-wasters, take note: Thousands more reviews live online at XLR8R.com.)

All this furious typing is giving me burnt fingers and hot-brain, so I'm off to toast my cone in greener pastures. Enjoy this scorcher, and we'll see you next month with our September Style special.

- Vivian Host, Editor

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Flying Lotus photographed in L.A. by Theo Jemison



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Mark Bartling

Design and production assistant Mark Bartling recently came to us from the marketing department of San Francisco's RVCA store. When he's not perfecting his sedentary Tech Deck skillz, this Costa Mesa native enjoys actual skating, memorizing cheat codes for Nintendo's Contra, and competing in Perfect Pushup contests with our managing editor. The 22-year-old office heartthrob would also like you to know that he was an extra in the film *Cliffhanger*, and that his record for grade-school playground fights is 2-0. (Up yours, Aaron!) teamsnacks.blogspot.com



Adam Schneider

Raised in Southern California, Adam Schneider moved to New York at 18 to study art history at NYU. He taught himself photography and began publishing his work within a year. He specializes in live concerts, music promotions, and parties, and most recently branched out into fashion, as evidenced by his work in this issue's style section. Adam's work has been showcased in various media outlets, including the *New York Post*, the *Village Voice*, and *AQUA*. When he's not shooting, he teaches elementary school in Brooklyn. madaes.com



Theo Jemison

Born in 1978 and raised between the U.S. and Australia, Theo Jemison discovered photography at the age of 19. Four years later, he moved to the City of Angels, which he currently calls home. His photography has taken him around the globe, and he feels blessed by the inspiring and talented people in his life. In the past he's shot for *The Fader*, *Urb*, *BPM*, and *Wax Poetics*. He photographed Flying Lotus on location in L.A. for this month's cover story. theojemison.com



Wyatt Williams

Prior to boarding the *XLR8R* cruise ship, Wyatt Williams enjoyed a wayfaring, land-loving life of itinerant work. After a few years of making cat furniture, welding bicycle frames, and spinning records at a small-town nightclub, he left the life he knew in Florida to start writing (and riding... to San Francisco). When he's drafting record reviews or interviewing Indian Jewelry, he often misses the smell of an oxy-acetylene welding torch. He is currently at work on his first novel.

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CORRECTIONS: In issue #118's Diamond Girls fashion spread, we switched two captions for the models' clothing. Yadirra (on page 88) wears t-shirt and necklace by Mama, Tupac rosary by Cubannie Links, vintage Nike belt from The Goods!, Judi Rosen jeans, and vintage Nike Cortez. On page 91, Jen wears earrings and necklace by Cubannie Links, t-shirt by Upper Playground, Renegade shorts, and vintage Nike Cortez. All other accessories stylist's own. See the shoot in its entirety at XLR8R.com/peepshow.



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BOURBON DRINKERS:

GIVE THEM 30 SECONDS

SUBJ. NO. 001



Photos: Mark Murrmann — TheStuffInside.com/mark

A hip-hop band staying true to their positive vision even if it costs them a contract. A tattoo artist breaking boundaries away from the spotlight. That's the stuff inside. We posted music, videos and ways to get involved to help them succeed. We're championing the stuff inside wherever we find it. Join us. TheStuffInside.com



HERE'S TO THE STUFF INSIDE

What's new at XLR8R.com

Exclusive music, videos, news, and extras from your favorite artists uploaded daily.

XLR8R TV



JAMIE LIDELL AND HIS ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT SONIC BUFFET

Since he's made the leap from experimental knob-twiddler to 21st-century soul crooner, Jamie Lidell has evolved into quite a showman. For his most recent tour, he ditched the solo looping and visual explosiveness of shows past in favor of a raucous, multi-piece live band—all the better to capture the tight orchestrations of his latest album, *JIM*. In this episode, Lidell talks to us about finding and keeping his voice (and his audience), invigorating body wash, and the Baltimore Oreos.

www.xlr8r.com/tv/65

Catch new episodes of *XLR8R TV* every Tuesday, including upcoming shows featuring NYC crate-diggers extraordinaire Kon & Amir, basshead Drop the Lime, a trip to Montreal's MUTEK Festival, and a tour of that fair city with turntable wrecker Kid Koala. It's—how you say?—*la merde!*

Podcast

JAY HAZE: KEEP YOUR THIRD EYE OPEN

Tweaking house, techno, R&B, and countless other styles, it only makes sense that Berlin-based expat Jay Haze should have an extensive back catalog. He recently combed through his hard drive to compile *Keep Your Third Eye Open* exclusively for *XLR8R*, and originality rules on this mix. "In house and techno, the formula is way too apparent and extremely overused," Jay told us earlier this year. "The music has become predictable and, as a result, boring." Not so here. The 13 gems on this mix—all unreleased tracks and versions—prove that Jay considers his musical compositions carefully, playing with tempos, twisting up synths and pianos, and breathing some fresh air back into house and techno.



For a lethal dose of *XLR8R*'s favorite tunes, sign up for our weekly podcast at *XLR8R.com*, where we feature exclusive mixes from all across the spectrum. Next up: cover man Flying Lotus and pal Samiyam (as Flyamsam) mix their favorite L.A. flavors.

www.xlr8r.com/podcast



May Issue #117

Listen to an audio interview with publisher Andrew Smith on the occasion of *XLR8R*'s 15th Anniversary, read extended text from our monumental meeting between Why?'s Yoni Wolf and Hüsker Dü's Bob Mould, and see archived stories relating to this special issue's features at XLR8R.com/117extras.



June/July Issue #118

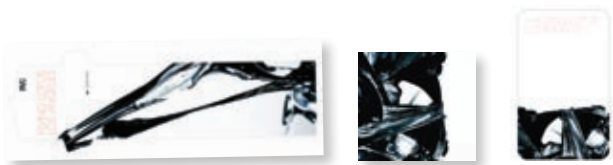
See video clips from Lexie Mountain Boys' live shows and more artwork from Subtle's *ExitingARM*, find out about Immortal Technique's favorite books, read more from our Vis-Ed interview with Damien Correll, and download Hercules and Love Affair's "Blind" at XLR8R.com/118extras.



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Also, in every issue, look for the *XLR8R.com* icon to find out about online extras, including extended interviews, photo outtakes, audio clips, and videos.



XLR8R's "Label Me" Contest

Win an exclusive *XLR8R* x R.E.Load messenger back and FlyLo goodness.

Now more than ever, the record label's job of distilling the finest sounds from an overcrowded music market is a tough one. So we salute those folks who make wandering through the storm a little bit easier. Warp Records, of course, has been a crucial in turning us on to some of our favorite music over the years, and their recent signing of cover star Flying Lotus is no exception. They've kindly offered up a slew of FlyLo merch for this contest, including his incredible *Los Angeles* on vinyl and CD, as well as a set of Flying Lotus iSkins and rolling papers. Best of all, the grand-prize winner can stuff it all in their sporty, super-limited *XLR8R* 15th Anniversary messenger bag by R.E.Load.

To win, all you have to do is tell us how many Californian artists Warp has signed before Flying Lotus. A winner will be chosen at random from the correctly answered entries.

- A) 0 B) 1
C) 2 D) 3

One grand-prize winner will receive: An exclusive *XLR8R* 15th Anniversary R.E.Load messenger back, Flying Lotus' *Los Angeles* on vinyl and CD, and Flying Lotus iSkins and rolling papers.

Two runners up will each receive: Flying Lotus' *Los Angeles* on vinyl and CD, plus Flying Lotus iSkins and rolling papers.

Entries will be accepted via standard mail and email. Entries must be received by August 26, 2008. Send your entry to: *XLR8R*'s Label Me Contest, 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117 or email contest@xlr8r.com with "*XLR8R*'s Label Me" in the subject line.

warprecords.com, reoloadbags.com



BJ "Bitter" Bastard's Guide to Starting a Label

It doesn't matter that labels and distributors are folding left and right and that the music industry has basically become junk-bond central. There are still some sure-fire ways to make it in the world of independent labels, and hell, they don't even necessarily require you to have artist contacts. Here's BJ's quick flowchart on how to make your everyday lemons into tasty record-label lemonade.

Are You...

...friends with famous people?

Face it: Starting an indie label has always been about hipster cachet. You think for a second that Dim Mak would've gotten anywhere without 1) Steve Aoki's jailbait sister reppin' it, 2) his bros with cameras that photograph him DJing with Lindsay Lohan, or 3) being friends with Danny "DJ Mom Jeans" Masterson from *That '70s Show*? (Actually, we're not so sure about that last one.)



No

Yes

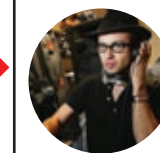
...the son or daughter of a rich dude?

Actually, screw hipster cachet. With Pops' deep pockets, you can do just about anything. Sure you might start your label with your own money (right!), but it certainly doesn't hurt when your dad owns the Benihana steakhouse chain. Or when your dad is director John Hughes.



No

...a club promoter?



Hey, you've already got the launching pad for the lamest label ever—your bobo-ass Vegas/London/L.A./New York/S.F./Paris megaclub! See where "yes" takes you.

Yes

No

...a magazine?

Who better to cash in on cool than the people who already decide what cool is? And fuck, you can't *make* yourself pay for advertising in your own magazine, right? Not capitalizing on this opportunity would just be flat-out stupid.



No

Yes



...a clothing label?

Everyone loves the fleece zip-up, tight jeans, fitted baseball cap, and Nike high-tops that you tarted up with that can of neon spraypaint. Trust that they'll also dig the "recently discovered synthesizers" noise bands that you're friends with.

Yes

No

...in with the blog-house bloggers?

Nothing screams hip like your college friend who illegally posts music on his Blogspot page and then spends all night writing a piss-poor treatise about how dope the new Simian Mobile Disco single is. If you've got a six-pack with this dude's name on it, the next interweb hit is yours. So go MySpace Guns 'n' Bombs and get working on that Southern Comfort-sponsored remix collabo!



Yes

Still No!

WHERE DO YOU LIVE?
MADAGASCAR?

YOU GOT YERSELF
A LABEL!



Lykke Li

Getting petulant with Sweden's newest purveyor of future pop.



It's one of those unbearable New York City summer afternoons. Everywhere you look, t-shirts are affixed to their owners' backs with sweat and it feels like you might choke on the humidity. Stockholm's Lykke Li sits at a crowded East Village café trying to refresh herself with a bowl of fruit. Perhaps it's the weather, or maybe the strawberries and bananas just aren't cutting it, but the Swedish singer-songwriter isn't stoked to chat. "Journalists ask me the same things wherever I go and I've been doing [interviews] since May of last year," she sighs. "But I like doing

them...sometimes."

With a restless petulance that's as endearing as it is frustrating, she leads me on, telling me she's starring in a film (she's not) and refusing to talk about the tattoo she got the previous day. "It's a secret," she says.

Lykke Li (pronounced "Leek-yuh Lee") has reason to be press-weary: Having already released her *Little Bit* EP and *Youth Novels* full-length in Sweden, she's been on the road for a year gearing up for those records' worldwide release, enduring nosy music scribes all along

the way.

Of the secrets we do know: 22-year-old Lykke grew up in an artistic household—her dad is a musician, her mom is a photographer; as a youth, she avoided her homeland's folk music in favor of the pop and hip-hop making its way across the Atlantic. At 18, Lykke Li began recording her own tracks, then shopped demos to notable Stockholm producers. "I didn't want to produce my own album," she says. "I always believe that working with other people gives you more. Someone suggested working with this

guy, so I got his phone number and just called him."

That guy was fellow Stockholm resident Bjorn Yttling of hit-making indie-pop trio Peter Bjorn and John. Known for his crisp production (he's also helmed records for Robyn and Nicolai Dunger), Yttling perfectly complemented Li's subversive brand of sprightly, sensual bubblegum pop. The album's first single, "Little Bit," which pairs Lykke Li's come-hither coo with plucking guitars and a minimal beat, is an ideal example of the undeniably catchy recipe that propels this record.

Youth Novels' confidence and sassy stride perhaps

comes from the speed with which it was recorded. "You have to have the ideas for what kind of music you want to make—that's been a lifelong process—but the actual [recording] was really fast," says Li. And with a gang of female artists—Santogold, Robyn, M.I.A.—currently serving up genre-smashing beats, this Swede has got a willing audience for her mix of pop, hip-hop, and modern folk. Li claims she hasn't listened to any of those artists (though Robyn appears in a YouTube-able live clip of Li's track "I'm Good, I'm Gone"). "We're all female and we're all doing something new... but that's not my inspiration,"

she says defiantly.

Bad moods aside, Lykke Li is a talented singer with a rare penchant for melody—and a plucky personality that she's not going to apologize for. "Sometimes you're [feeling] social and sometimes you're not," she offers. Yeah, we noticed.

Lykke Li's *Youth Novels* is out August 19 on LL Recordings. myspace.com/lykkeli

GO BANG!

Pirate ships and goat-throwing from **Bang Gang**, Australia's electro hooligans.



Bang Gang's 12-inches sound like how I imagine Australia—it's permanent summer, everyone stays up 'til the sun comes up eating popsicles and making up new slang words for dolphin sex. It doesn't matter if you can't make it to Sydney to confirm this rumor—just put tracks like “Fun Punch,” “Mr. Ice Cream,” or “One-Inch

Badge Pin” on the hi-fi at your next blogger-filled basement bash and watch it turn into one of those who-put-aciiid-in-the-Kool-Aid-type affairs. **Bang Gang** started as a party in 2003, and quickly melded into a DJ crew, comprised of 24-hour-party-people Ajax, Gus Da Hoodrat, DJ Damage, Nolan Nolan, Jamie Doom, and Dangerous Dan (a

co-founder of famed clothing label Ksubi). As if this weren't enough of an incestuous, strobe-lit Aussie affair, the record label was created in 2006 to showcase the 12-inch talents of fellow countrymen Bag Raiders, Like Woah!, Whitenoise, and K.I.M. (of The Presets). And contributing to this grand candy-colored dance hallucination is

Bang Gang's cute and kooky cover art. We love it so much we asked Mr. Doom if he would persuade graphic artists Mitch Beige Brown and Hoodrat to whip us up a little something sweet... and here it is. *Tyra Bangs*
banggang12inches.com

To download this exclusive graphic as wallpaper, visit XLR8R.com/119extras.



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High Places



Brooklyn duo High Places came alive in the summer of 2006 when solo musicians and email friends Rob Barber and Mary Pearson decided to go on tour together. Almost immediately, the Philadelphia native and the girl from Kalamazoo, Michigan began fusing themselves into one band. "We just realized our songs fit together really well," Barber states from a café in Fort Greene, Brooklyn.

As it turns out, theirs is a rare, fruitful collaboration that harmoniously balances each bandmembers' musical skill and aesthetic approach. Both make visual and aural art—Barber with formal art training under his belt and Pearson with a background in orchestration. "It's refreshing to work with someone who's not trained," Pearson says of the pair's dynamic. "People that don't have [musical training] often have more creative ideas, because [they're not] burdened by over-thinking things."

The notion of assembling found materials is key to High Places' sound. Taking its cues from the field-recording techniques of global pop ethnographers Sublime Frequencies, the band uses humble

tools—the laptop's built-in microphone is their main recording device—to create reverb-heavy sound collage. Calling this process "audio scrapbooking," the group tweaks their mixes—which might include the crumpling of paper or the hum of a garbage truck—into melodies above which Pearson sets her lilting vocals. The result, which simultaneously recalls dub and the primitive indie rockisms of Beat Happening, is at turns haunting and cheerful; the band's use of non-traditional instruments and ethereal qualities often draw comparisons to Atlas Sound (Bradford Cox is a fan) and Panda Bear.

Though the purely platonic duo resides in Brooklyn, their music sounds decidedly non-urban. Barber says the rural, perhaps even beachy vibe is intentional. He concurs that High Places' songs like "Head Spins" and "Banana Slug/Cosmonaut" are escapist, and says he "loves getting out of the city as much as possible." And while the band's initial recordings might come off as precious—"Someone might say, 'My girlfriend would really like this!'" jokes Pearson—their live show is a different animal

altogether. Taking inspiration from acts like Black Dice and Lightning Bolt (with whom the group are friends), High Places strives to funnel all of its multilayered sounds into one swell of noise. "[We're] usually three times as loud as the other bands we open for," Barber tells us.

Having found increased exposure after critical acclaim for *03/07-09/07*, an online collection of vinyl-only releases, the band has a jam-packed fall ahead of them. Following recent appearances at France's Midi Fest and the Pitchfork Music Festival, and dates with L.A. bands No Age and Abe Vigoda, they recently hit Europe, opening for Deerhunter. And after going label-less up until now, Barber and Pearson have signed with Chicago avant-rock imprint Thrill Jockey, who will release their debut LP in late September. What better time than autumn to drench yourself in sunny reverb?

High Places self-titled LP is out September 23 on Thrill Jockey.
myspace.com/hellohighplaces



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"Friends Forever"

Brooklyn electro-IDM experimentalist **Datach'i** on the subtleties of **Gary Numan's** recently reborn *Replicas*.

It's no secret that the influences behind Joseph Fraioli's potent blend of IDM, drill & bass, and electronic glitch are all over the map. On *13*, his sixth album as **Datach'i**, he pays tribute to everyone from Motörhead to Fugazi. But it's his beat-spattered cover of Gary Numan's "Something's in the House" that offers the purest look into the impact that synth-pop has had on his career. Here he takes a look back at **Gary Numan** and Tubeway Army's classic 1979 record, *Replicas*.



The first time I heard Gary Numan and Tubeway Army's *Replicas*—or anything by Numan for that matter—must've been around 1993 or '94. It was a time when I was really influenced musically by punk, hardcore, and garage rock—bands like The Pretty Things, Bad Brains, Minor Threat, The Vibrators, The Buzzcocks. Around the same time, I was just starting to fuck around with synthesizers, and had borrowed a Roland Juno 106 from a friend. I remember thinking how bad-ass it was, and got totally obsessed with its ability to bend and shape manufactured tones and create anything from subtle nuances to electromagnetic time-

shifting warbles. Up until my exposure to *Replicas* and Gary Numan, I hadn't experienced music that bridged both of these influences—the energy of punk and the cool intimacy of synthetic electronic sounds. *Replicas* blew my mind. It is one of my earliest encounters with electronic music.

Anyone who produces music of any sort can find a lesson in balance and contrast in listening to this album; a sort of rare energy that comes from combining opposing elements to successfully create a new one.

One of these elements is Numan's superior synth playing and programming.

It has the ability to cut through everything (like on the gold standard "Are 'Friends' Electric?") as well as sit far below the mix, with just a note or two playing throughout an entire track (like on "You Are in My Vision"). As well, you can hear Kraftwerk's influence on his songwriting, programming, arrangement, and production techniques; there is power and drive yet still plenty of space. Through this soundscape a bigger picture is created—you can almost see into the songs visually.

Replicas, which has just been reissued in double-CD format, may be the pinnacle of Gary Numan's signature sound—that

point where everything comes together. Every artist or band has that sweet spot and, although there are many great Numan albums, this is his most cohesive and a must-have for any fan of electronic music. A perfect balance of songwriting and production with a unique style as suspended in time as it is timeless.

Datach'i's *13* is out now Jafbox. Gary Numan's *Replicas Redux* is out now on Beggars. datachi.com, numan.co.uk

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ARTIST Maetrik
RELEASE 'Space Chronic EP'
LABEL Mothership

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ARTIST Faze Action
RELEASE 'Original Disco Motion'
LABEL Faze Action Recordings

"Faze Action return with the 5th release on their own label. 'Original Disco Motion' gets the remix treatment from Jay Shepheard and includes a disco mix by Faze Action."



ARTIST James Teej
RELEASE 'String Theory EP'
LABEL Connect Four Records

"Canadian based James Teej debut on Connect Four with a fantastic deep house, vocal based 3 tracker. Includes the track 'I'm Human Now', 'Runway Purple' and 'Super Symmetry.' For 'I'm Human Now', we hired Cassy from Berlin to do a remix, and she delivered a fantastic more dubbed remix!"



ARTIST Chopstick & Johnjon
RELEASE 'Birds' Afrilounge Remixes
LABEL Dirt Crew Recordings

"Dirt Crew welcomes two new hot producers to their label, being known for their own imprints Criminal and Baalsaal and collaborations as Eyerer and Chopstick and of course after the brilliant remix they did for 'Boogie Down' earlier this year they signed this absolute smash tech house BOMB called 'Birds.'"



ARTIST Alland Byallo & Kenneth Scott
RELEASE 'Tomorrow & Tomorrow Again'
LABEL Nightlight Music

"Alland Byallo and labelmate Kenneth Scott team up to deliver the summery techno hit, 'Tomorrow & Tomorrow Again.' Minimal techno legend D.Diggler delivers a bouncy techno remix, while Dirtybird Worthy brings a serious bassline bomb."



ARTIST Black Devil Disco Club
RELEASE 'Eight Oh Eight'
LABEL Lo Recordings

"Originally released in 1978, Black Devil's 'Disco Club' was an extremely rare disco masterpiece, an epic journey into the deepest electronic disco that has been given a new life by record collectors and lovers of Italo and Cosmic disco sounds alike. Then 28 years later '28 After' followed updating and expanding the Black Devil sound. Like It's predecessors 'Eight Oh Eight' features 6 tracks, but now even more haunting and bizarre."

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NATIVE INSTRUMENTS

Tetine

Sexy Brazilian expats explore the mutations of tropical punk funk.



About 25 years ago, Arnold Schwarzenegger told Playboy Channel viewers that the "ass" is the best thing about Brazilian women and their nation's culture. Such stereotypes of Brazil are exactly what São Paulo-bred "tropical mutant punk funk" group Tetine explores, critiques, exploits, and ironically salutes.

Vocalist and multi-instrumentalist Eliete Mejorado often takes the stage in the scant garb of a Carnival dancer, and leads the audience through sexually charged, politically provocative songs like the Tone Loc-sampling hip-hop number "L.I.C.K. My Favela." "It's fun and political at the same time," Mejorado says of the band's ethos. "The world is an ultra-technological place and super-sexualized, but people don't really know what to do with their bodies."

Growing up in Brazil, Mejorado and partner-in-crime Bruno Verner felt out of place as conceptual artists and punks until they encountered a noise in the streets. *Funk carioca*, a *favela*-grown version of Miami bass, enthralled Tetine and impacted their mutant hybrid of electro, post-punk, and synth-pop. "We loved the attitude and we identified with the D.I.Y. side of the scene," Verner says.

The duo—who have worked together since 1995—moved to London in 2001 and introduced the British to funk *carioca* (sometimes called *baile* funk) a few years later via their Slum Dunk radio show and an attendant compilation on the Mr. Bongo label. Verner laughs about how many listeners didn't realize the rappers were speaking in

Portuguese but, he adds, "the beats got everybody."

Though they're now Londoners, Tetine's connection to their homeland remains strong. On their recent album, *Let Your X's Be Y's*, The Human League goes to Rio on "What a Gift to Get," while a *favela* street-party element screams throughout the thrashy, *baile*-electro jaunt "I Go to the Doctor." Verner says the duo became "super-aware" of Brazilian culture after they left home. "You sort of lose your identity, but at the same time, you're so connected to your roots that something strange happens in your head," he explains.

Tetine calls the resulting aesthetic "tropical punk," a title they used to brand a show of radical Brazilian contemporary art they curated last year at the Whitechapel Art Gallery. Tropical punk is also an apt description of *The Sexual Life of the Savages*, the provocatively titled 2005 collection of '80s post-punk and new wave São Paulo bands they compiled for Soul Jazz. "We're playing with the cliché of being the 'savage Brazilian,'" Mejorado offers. "We celebrate the fact that we are seen by others as savages."

Tetine's *Let Your X's Be Y's* is out now on Soul Jazz. Their Slum Dunk radio show can be heard on London's Resonance FM 104.4. tetine.net

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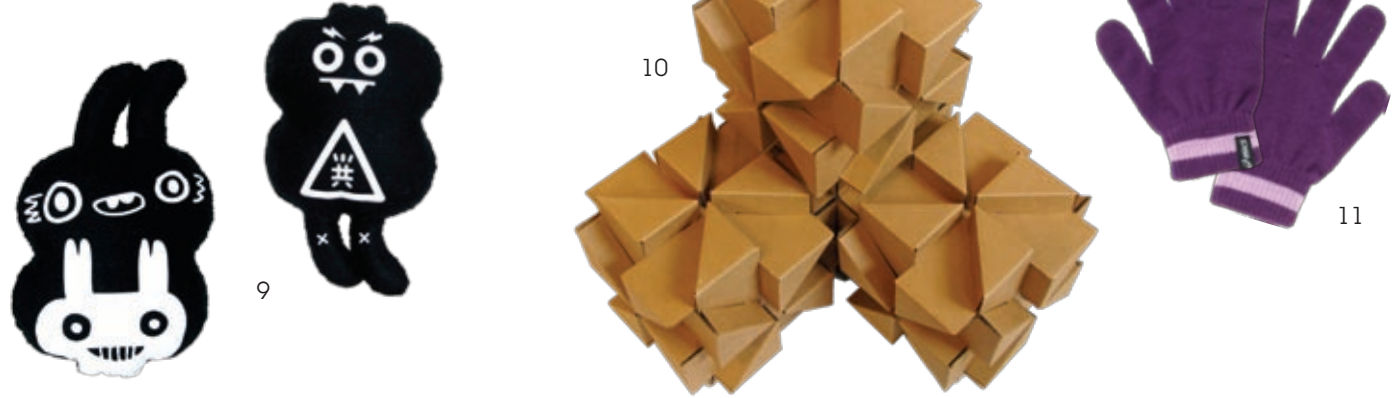
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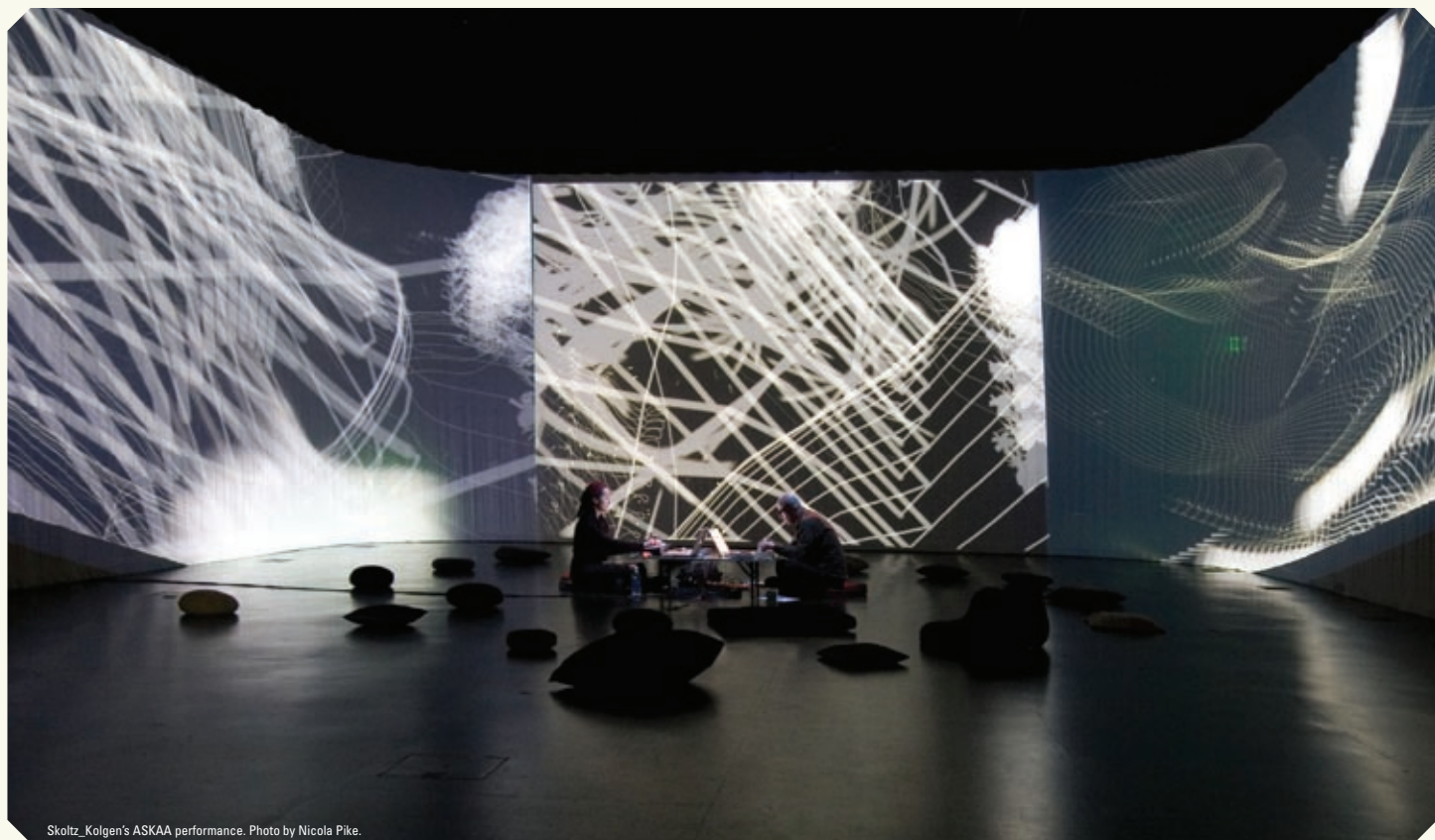
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Bigger & Boulder

Colorado's idyllic hippie town launches its own techno festival.



Skoltz_Kolgen's ASKAA performance. Photo by Nicola Pike.

Buddhist universities, clean tap water from nearby glaciers, people riding their bikes to work, smiling folks walking the streets, happy dogs flanked by their proud owners, fresh air filling your lungs, and the sound of techno pumping hard at a downtown park. When locals say, "Boulder is 25 square miles surrounded by reality," they've pretty much nailed it.

The idyllic Colorado town was the setting of this year's first **Communikey Festival** (abbreviated CMKY), held April 18-20. Hosted by an enthusiastic crew

of DJs, producers, promoters, and multimedia artists from Boulder and Denver, Communikey takes cue from famed techno festivals like Mutek, DEMF, and Decibel, but gives its own special spin to the proceedings.

"Communikey was born out of a history of electronic music culture in Colorado," explains Kate Lesta, one of the creative directors of the event. "It started with renegade mountain parties, where we would haul our soundsystem into the woods and dance around a bonfire under the full moon.

The community bond is very strong. We know we're taking our local scene to the next level, but everyone here is quite seasoned for it, and we know the community was ready for this."

And ready they were. Showcases from locals—Denver's Rope Swing Cities label, CacheFlowe, Brandon Brown, Ivy, Multicast, Dave Fodel, and Beatport's Tom Hoch—were on par with stellar performances by international techno and experimental artists Pole, Kalabrese, Bruno Pronsato, Skoltz_Kolgen, and Vincent Lemieux.

Aside from partying, Communikey's other agenda was to explore ways to offset the effects of a festival of this magnitude on the environment. "If the dancefloor builds the strongest community we know, I feel the issue of sustainability needs to be breathed into the industry," says Lesta. "I believe the people who make up our industry have the capacity to take these problems and create some truly excellent working solutions for electronic music and digital art culture." *Ejival* communikey.us

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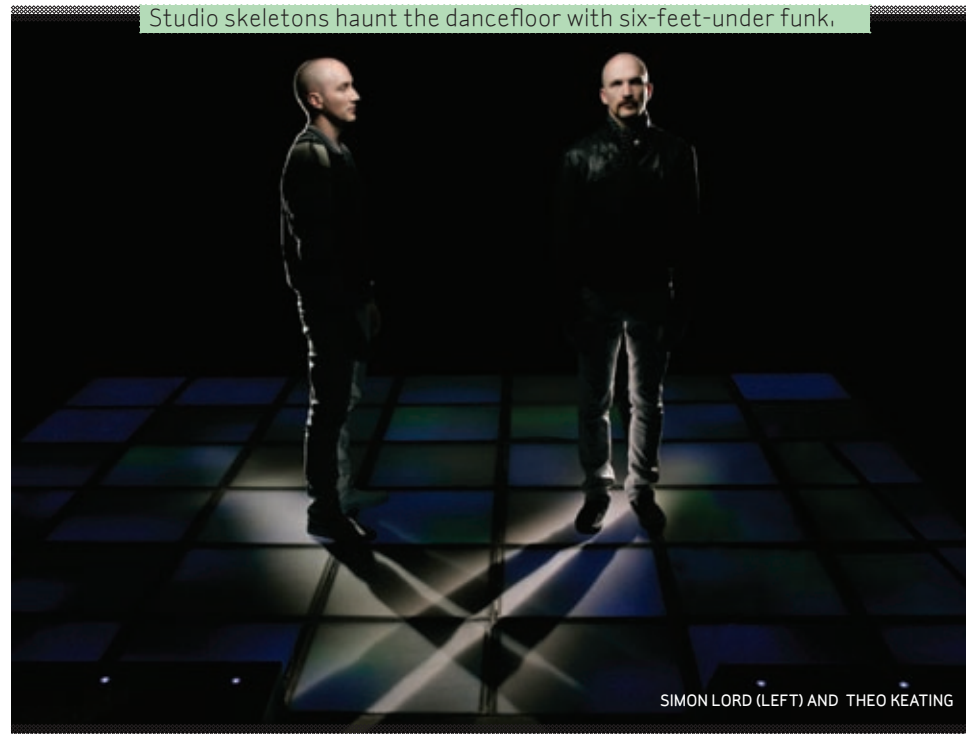


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Black Ghosts

Studio skeletons haunt the dancefloor with six-feet-under funk.



SIMON LORD (LEFT) AND THEO KEATING

The Black Ghosts' Simon Lord and Theo Keating have got skeletons in their closets... in the form of hoodies and gloves printed with skinny white bones. They've also got a supernatural amount of experience under their own pasty skins. Signed to Wall of Sound as The Wiseguys, Keating (a.k.a. DJ Touché) was responsible for such massive tracks as "Ooh La La!" and "Start the Commotion" (tracks heard in *Zoolander* and ads for Budweiser and Mitsubishi). And any electro-house fan worth their Day-Glo sunglasses is familiar with Justice's career-defining remix of Simian's "Never Be Alone"—that's Simian ex-frontman Lord on vocals.

When Keating started to record his last DJ Touché record, he sought out Lord to do guest vocals. A mutual friend delivered a few one-minute taster tracks to the former Simian member, who quickly returned them with lyrics. "They weren't even meant for him to write to!" Keating exclaims. With the help of ye olde internet, the guys were working together immediately. "No time was wasted sitting around in studios while one guy is programming and the other is bored," Keating describes. "It was probably the most painless way to make a record." All that was left was for the duo to bond on tour (which they did, over Japanese horror flicks).

The Ghosts' eponymous album is a refreshing, neo-gothic update of '80s sensibilities; it boasts a collaboration with Blur's Damon Albarn and a suite of clever remixes from Switch, Kissy Sell Out, and Fake Blood (rumored to be

Keating's side-project). *The Black Ghosts* is rife with Lord's spooky lyrics, which bob up and down over ghostly 4/4s, as on "Any Way You Choose to Give It," where he beseeches "Please appreciate the limits of the flesh/The spirit will not rest, will not be satisfied with anybody else."

"I just try to show both sides," says Lord of his grim couplets. "To me that's a lot more interesting than making candy floss for 12-year-olds to dance to. I like songs that are a bit ambiguous." This is particularly evident on the epic electro of album starter "Some Way Through This," on which Lord gloomily whines, "If this house was on fire/Would you tell me your desire?/If my hands were 'round your throat/Would you tell me what I need to know" in a way that could be read as sexy or creepy... or both.

While the Ghosts have managed to differentiate themselves sonically, it must be hard competing with other rising hearts of darkness such as Black Keys, Black Lips, Black Kids, and The Blacks. Lord is undaunted, calling for them to band together into a coven of pop *noir*. "We should have a reunion, all the 'black' bands joining. A conference," he says mystically. *Daaark*.

The Black Ghosts's self-titled album is out now on IAMSOUND. theblackghosts.co.uk



For a full interview with Black Ghosts, check XLR8R.com/119extras.

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Clothes Captioned

Lemar & Dauley

A brightly colored brand revives the *Do the Right Thing* look.



Lemar & Dauley founders Kareem Blair and Daniel Pierre operate out of a two-floor rental in West Harlem with a pond and a garden in the back. "Everyone comes to look at clothes and then ends up chilling all day," laughs Blair. As it turns out, the office is merely a reflection of the L&D ethos, which blends big-city flavor with tropical colors and beachy bounce. Indeed, the five-year-old brand's appeal to the Kanye-loving urbanites of tomorrow has not gone unnoticed—they've recently collaborated on shoes with DC and Adidas, and designed a hoodie for Kid Robot. Not a bad look for Blair and Pierre, both 26, who met as visual art majors at NYC's LaGuardia High School of Arts.

Blair, who rocks SkyZoo and Styles P on his studio stereo, says the fall collection has varied influences. "The color scheme was inspired by Brazilian artists Os Gemeos—purples, blues, and teals with crimson—and we drew from '90s fallen sports heroes, such as Darryl Strawberry and Mike Tyson. Finally, it's an Olympic year, so national colors, flags, and pennants have a heavy presence." He also shared with us the inspiration behind the summer jams shown here. *Tyra Bangs* lemaranddauley.com



Mecca & Medina polo (\$60)
Referencing the nicknames of Manhattan and Brooklyn, this polo was loosely styled around a character from the movie *Paid in Full*, who dressed like he grew up in Martha's Vineyard rather than Harlem.



Swim Starks Sharks tee (\$32)
It's a lyric from Ghostface's Supreme Clientele, which references Iron Man's Tony Starks, but we switched it to John Starks from the NY Knicks.



Numbers board shorts (\$60)
This pattern was influenced by the movie *White Men Can't Jump*. The pattern was crazy, so I decided to go beach flow rather than to the streets with this one.



Raw Live tee (\$32)
I found a discarded flyer on the ground walking through Brooklyn in 2004. It was a party with Big Daddy Kane performing. I thought the flyer would make a dope graphic one day, so I kept it and finally used it four years later.



Surf's Up board shorts (\$60)
These joints is classic, straight Gilligan's Island flow. The minute I saw them, I knew they were ill, so I hooked 'em up for summer '08.



Modern Art tank (\$48)
Children's books are extremely visual and make great use of color. My goal was to create an item that represented a childlike quality with an athletic vibe. Part artistic tank top, part athletic jersey.

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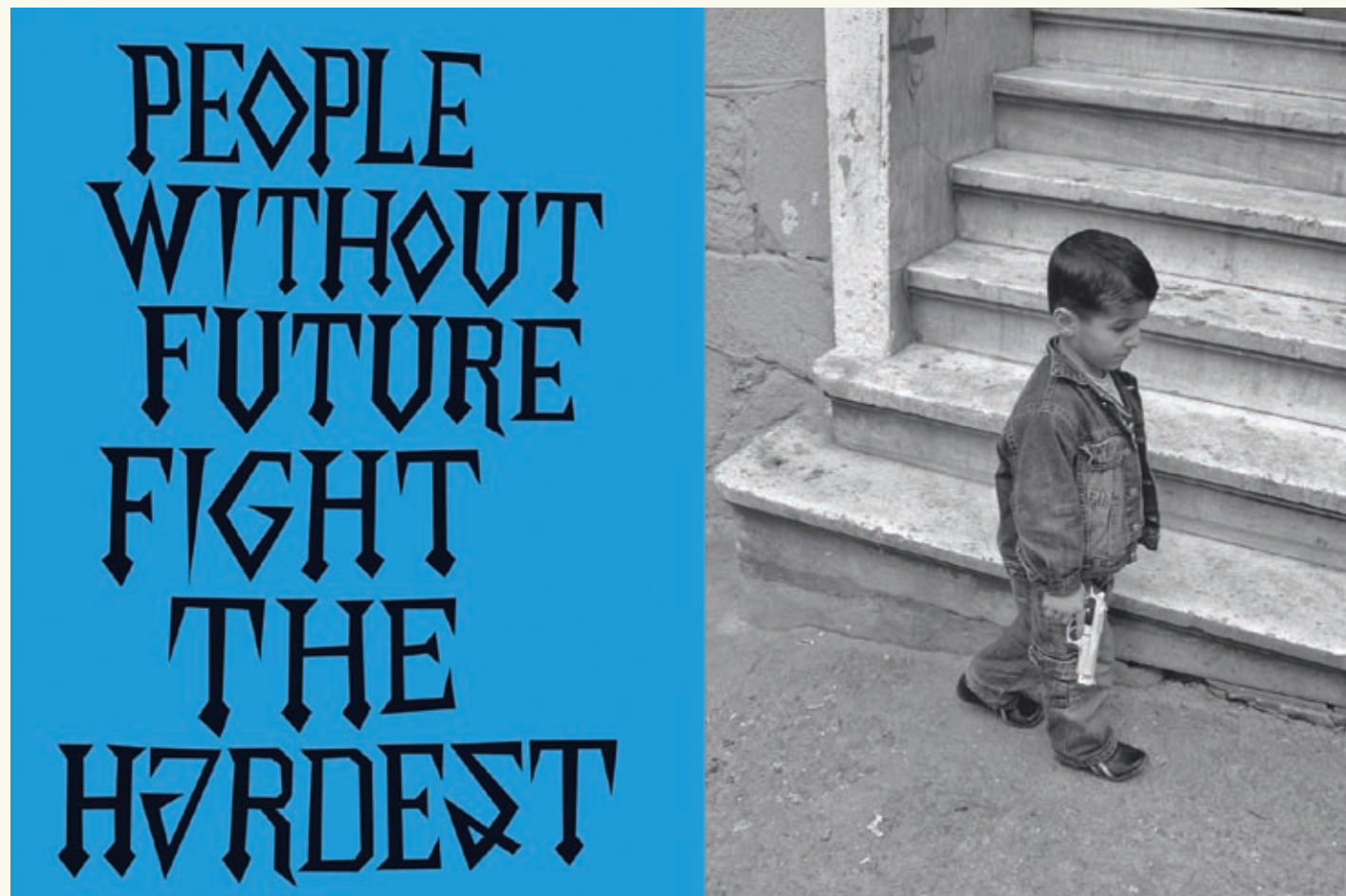
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Arts & Letters

The *Neo Utopia* book puts Berlin on blast—**SuperBlast**, that is.



(above and opposite) Spreads from *Neo Utopia: The Art Work of SuperBlast*



Berlin graffiti writer-turned-graphic designer Manuel "SuperBlast" Osterholt has put in work for Ecco, Sony PSP, and Nokia's Nseries (as well as some limited-edition items for Wood Wood and Montana Cans) but don't call him a sell-out. As his career retrospective *Neo Utopia: The Art*

& Work of SuperBlast (Publikat/Gingko; paperback, \$29.95) shows, the guy's got skills with paint can *and* pixel, and this book thoughtfully considers the moral and ethical implications of both getting up and getting paid by corporate clients. But why commit to print in the first

place? "A book is like freezing time," says Osterholt. "You get an overview of your process and development and... maybe you can spark a thought for somebody, who then can benefit from it and pass it over to somebody else. For me, creating is something you don't own."

Similarly deep sentiments find their way into *Neo Utopia*, though the text is freewheeling and haphazard. No mind—what this book lacks in the editing department, it makes up for in wit, charm, and ogle-worthy images of SuperBlast's work, whose bright colors, folk-art-esque characters, and free-ranging

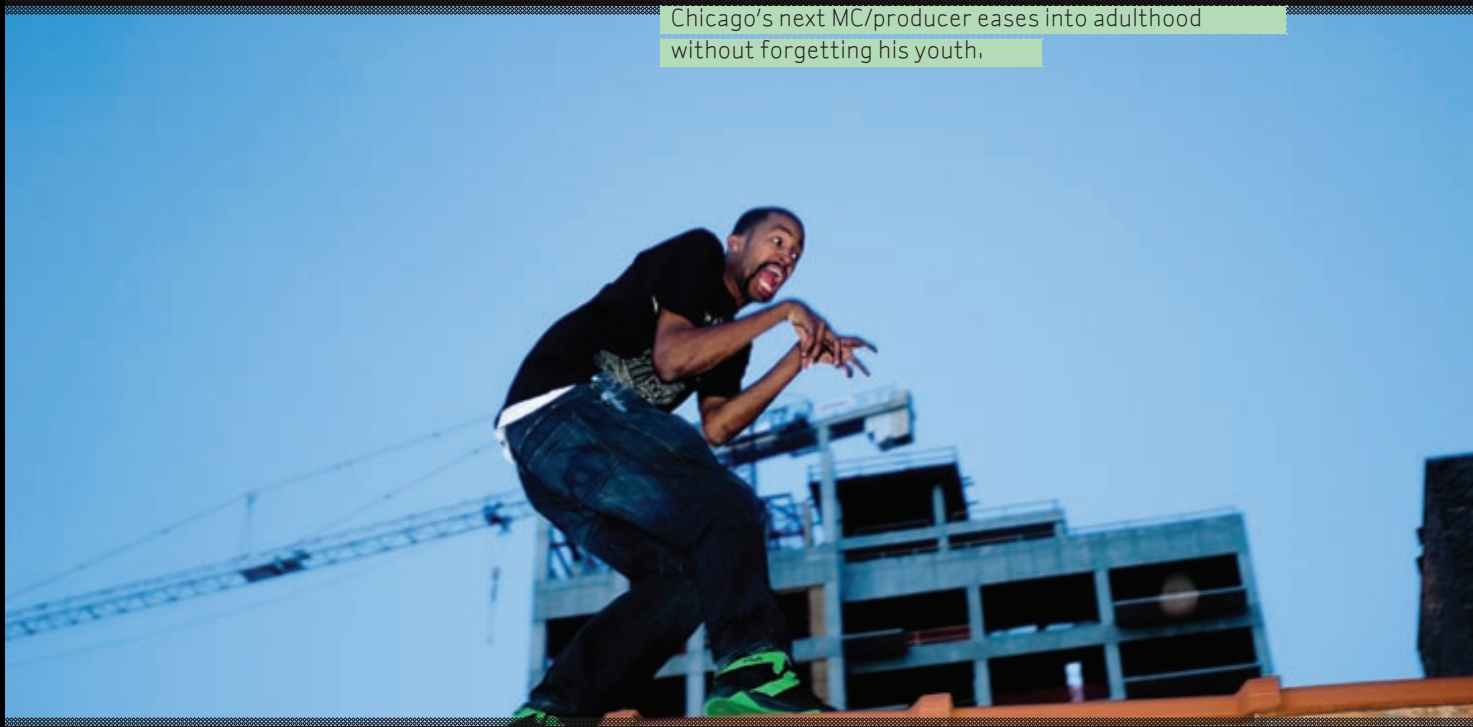
lines contain echoes of Dutch designer Parra and U.K. sketch artist Jon Burgerman, Brazilian street artists Os Gemeos and even old-school grafists such as Dondi White. Perhaps the raddest thing about this 160-pager, though, is the inclusion of SuperBlast's fonts, the product of his training with typography maestro

Lucas de Groot (who designed the Thesis and Calibri font families). "I love letters," explains Osterholt, "so I want to understand all aspects of them." *Alli Gitlow*
superblast.de, gingkopress.com

For an in-depth interview with SuperBlast, visit XLR8R.com/119extras.

Kid Static

Chicago's next MC/producer eases into adulthood without forgetting his youth.



Of the many ways Moses "Kid Static" Harris Jr. has been described, "energetic" is arguably the most fitting. The 25-year-old Chicago MC/producer isn't exactly bouncing off the walls, but he can't hide his youthful passion for everything he tries his hand at—which includes making music, stunt work for films like *I Am Legend*, and practicing the acrobatic French art known as *parkour*, which requires him to literally bounce off the walls of various urban structures. "It's about confidence and getting in touch with the part of your mind that says 'You can do it,' before the other part that goes 'Maybe that's not a good idea' comes in," says Harris, enthusiastically describing *parkour* and the related art of free running.

That confidence no doubt came in handy when Kid Static approached the boss at his nine-to-five about letting him do his web-coding work from the road while on tour with progressive producer Yea Big. His boss agreed, and the duo took its synchronized dance routines and electric renditions of offbeat hip-hop from *Yea Big + Kid Static*, their 2007 Jib Door

debut, across North America, making new fans and sharing stages with spaz punks and crunk acts. Kid Static argues that he and Yea Big can fit in anywhere. "No matter what's playing, people identify with fun," he says.

While the duo preps their second LP, Kid Static doesn't want people to forget that he's also a solo act; he originally started rhyming over self-made drum & bass and IDM tracks as Static Messenger. "Before I was with Yea Big, I was still that energetic rapping dude," says Harris. "[It was] like, 'Man, you're like all over the place. I can't take pictures of you 'cause you don't stay in one place for too long.'"

After deciding to take a stab at producing hip-hop—"It was just a natural transformation," he explains—Kid Static went on to put out the self-released LP, *Have You Seen This Man?*, in 2005. He also spent two years rapping and playing keys for the now-defunct comedic hip-hop live band The Cankles. More recently he dropped another self-released album, the experimental *In the Meantime*, an appetizer to his official forthcoming sophomore set.

His new solo LP will feature tracks produced by Maker, Ill Legit, Yoda Rock, and himself, with grooves ranging from the uplifting, horn-drenched heater "I'll Be" to the meditative downtempo vibes of "Breathe." "You can see the adult coming out with how I feel about certain things that are going on today, but not in a preachy manner," he explains of the record's lyrical content.

Even though he's growing up, Kid Static isn't about to take the doom-and-gloom route. "I'm a lighthearted individual," he says. "The things I care about I take very seriously, but the things that don't affect me or aren't really worth worrying about in my mind, I brush off."

Kid Static's yet-to-be-titled album will be out this fall.

myspace.com/kidstatic

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Hopped Up

Two DVDs explore America's hidden train-hopping subculture.



A still from *Catching Out*.

Two summers ago, in a 100-degree boxcar in southern Oregon, a pair of fellow train riders asked me to never write about train-hopping, ever. "We need this," they pleaded, over a case of tepid Hamm's.

This sentiment is echoed in Sarah George's documentary *Catching Out* (Worthy Ent./Microcinema, \$24.95). "I think it's really important that as few people as possible find out about it," explains a peripheral character late in the film, hinting at the fact that train-riding is one of the riskiest American subcultures. It is highly dangerous, increasingly illegal, and has a largely untold history that's foundational to the American identity.

Train-riding exists in the space where American individualism meets legitimate anarchy—exposing it means more railroad police, more surveillance, and more

inexperienced riders losing appendages. As such, every documentary on the subject is tainted by a bit of exploitation and voyeurism. *Catching Out* comes close to getting it right by focusing on real people and why they hop trains. George handles her subjects—including 20-something Jessica, Switch and Baby Girl (who meet on the rails and eventually join the straight world to have a baby), and Lee, an eco-activist who rides compulsively and lives in a hand-built shack—with a great deal of respect and affection, and you can tell they've put a lot of trust in her (getting a hobo to allow you access to his squat is no mean feat).

Train on the Brain (Hollywood Can Suck It, \$14.95) focuses more on the physical experience of train-hopping—and the unbeatable highs and frequent hells British director Alison Murray experienced over two months and

two cross-continental rides. Murray deals with everything from traveling hundreds of miles in the wrong direction to sleeping behind a McDonald's dumpster to a scummy lecher who presumably does inappropriate things with an underage runaway in another train car. The film is voyeuristic but pulls back just at the point of exploitation. Regardless, the scene where Murray almost gets left by the side of the tracks naked in the middle of nowhere makes it worth the watch. *Michael Byrne*

catchingout.com, trainonthebrain.com, microcinema.com

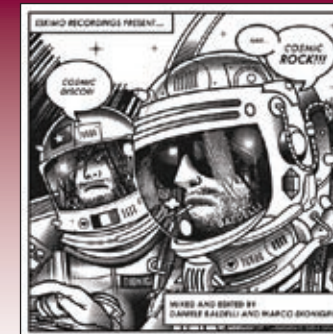


To see clips from *Train on the Brain*, visit XLR8R.com/119extras.



LOW MOTION DISCO
Keep It Slow CD/LP

Sure to appeal to fans of the Balearic and cosmic grooves of Lindström & Prins Thomas or A Mountain Of One, the debut full-length by secretive producers Low Motion Disco is 13 perfect tracks designed for horizontal dancing – KLF-styled sample skullduggery, chilled grooves, dubby beats and uplifting melodic hooks.



DANIELE BALDELLI & MARCO DIONIGI
Cosmic Disco?! Cosmic Rock!!! CD

Eskimo delivers another next-level mix CD, nearly trumping last year's Prins Thomas mix, *Cosmo Galactic Prism*. Daniele Baldelli was one of the first Italian DJs, and *Cosmic Disco?!* is a peek into that era w/tracks by Fra Lippo Lippi, Thompson Twins, Spirit, The Dream Syndicate, and many more.



2562
Aerial CD/2LP

If you can imagine a perfect union between Benga or Skream-style rhythm and bass with Basic Channel soundscapes, you will realize why everyone is so excited about this album. Tipped by DJs like Mary Anne Hobbs, Skream, Kode 9 and Laurent Garnier, the summer of 2008 surely has 2562 written all over it.



VARIOUS ARTISTS
Cocoon Compilation H CD/6x12"

One of the most successful compilation series in Germany alphabetically ascends to the letter "H," once again expressing techno kingpin Sven Väth's view of the current state of club music. Features best-of hits and exclusive tracks by Joris Voorn, Oliver Ho, Dubfire, Gui Boratto, Efdemin, and more.



ÓLAFUR ARNALDS
Eulogy for Evolution CD/LP

Eulogy is the debut release by Iceland's Ólafur Arnalds, and the first N. American release by London-based cinematic music label, Erased Tapes. Mixing strings with loops, ambience, electronics and beats, Arnalds combines classical instrumentation with an indie-rock aesthetic that has drawn comparisons to Sigur Rós.



DUSK + BLACKDOWN
Margins Music CD

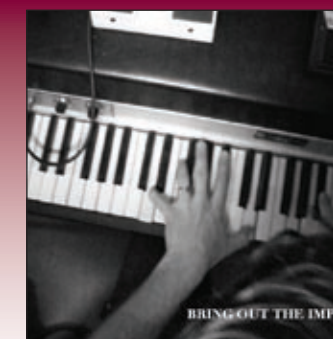
Welcome to *Margins Music*, the debut album from the London-based production duo of Dan Frampton and Martin Clark. With a pioneering vision that goes beyond the confines of dubstep, you'll hear the sounds of UK hip-hop, *desi* beats, Bollywood and ragga – another side of London.

keysoundrecordings



PONI HOAX
Images of Sigrid CD/2LP

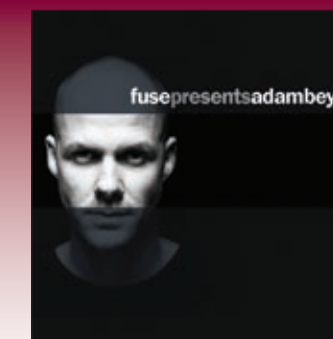
Images... is the second full-length release from Poni Hoax, the 5-headed French pop/post-punk/post-techno/disco juggernaut. Produced by Joakim Bouaziz (Air, Tiga, Annie), this is a living testament to the dark, cathartic power of disco and electro-pop, described by a raving press as a combination of Nick Cave and Giorgio Moroder.



IMPS
Bring Out The Imps CD

This is the debut release from IMPS, a collaboration between Australians Ian Chaplin and Philip Rex (Decoy) and Minilogue's Sebastian Mullaert and Marcus Henriksson. Spaced-out, groovy dub jams with sax, Rhodes, Moog, tape delay and percussion, straddling a space between improv and electronica.

mule electronic



ADAM BEYER
Fuse Presents Adam Beyer CD

Swedish techno pioneer and Drumcode CEO Adam Beyer now joins the ranks of other superstar DJs with his own *Fuse* mix, joining the likes of Dave Clarke, Steve Bug and DJ Hell as favorites at the legendary Belgian techno Mecca. With tracks by Joel Mull, Paco Osuna, Mathew Jonson, Martinez, and many more.



FLYING

HIGH

IN A LOST CORNER OF THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY,
HIP-HOP MYSTIC **FLYING LOTUS** SEARCHES
FOR THE IMPERFECT BEAT.





It's a hot afternoon in May, and I'm driving a cheap rental car through the awful sprawl of the San Fernando Valley. I'm bored out of my fucking mind. I keep imagining that if a guerilla war broke out around here, soldiers could wear stucco camouflage and a Carl's Jr. hat, and they'd be practically invisible. I'm also starting to understand why *Fast Times'* Jeff Spicoli hit such a nerve with people familiar to this place. Is there anything to do other than smoke pot and drive around?

I'm headed to Winnetka—a weird little 'burb slightly north of Woodland Hills, a nudge west of Reseda. Here, seemingly smack dab in the pit of anti-inspiration, is the production studio of 24-year-old Steven "Flying Lotus" Ellison—and the potential staging ground for hip-hop's next great subversion.

CALIFORNIA DREAMING

Flying Lotus first appeared on Carlos Niño's *Sound of LA* compilation in early 2006, and quickly followed up with his debut album, *1983*, on Plug Research that fall. Like Dabrye and Dilla, but more off-kilter, Ellison reinvigorated the idea of an instrumental beat album; *1983* showed him flexing all the elements that backpack rap had long forgotten about: melody, restraint, and the ability to tap influences outside of itself. It didn't hurt that European acts like Modeselektor saw the album's title track as a bridge between their own "wonky techno" and the Bomb Squad-era beats that first inspired them.

Speaking of wonky, Ellison's work is particularly known for that production tic. It's most evident in his drums—the hits feel human, as if played by hand, but they're artificial in texture. It's a technique that creates a kind of floating sensation, with the timing constantly shifting in and out of focus, pulling and repelling the listener all at once.

But describing Flying Lotus' music as "wonky" is an easy way out. The real thing that makes Ellison stand out is his musicality—a far more nebulous thing to define, but a quality that courses throughout *Los Angeles*, his recent album for beat boundary-pushers Warp Records. Tracks like "Riot," with its constant chord changes, sit in the experimental space between dubstep's bass wobble and the dusty lineage of L.A.'s experimental scene, while album closer "Auntie's Lock" dispenses with hip-hop completely in favor of an organ-driven, minimal pulse.

Nonetheless, the biggest point of public curiosity about Ellison remains his family lineage: He's the great nephew of the late Alice Coltrane. However, when I meet him on this hot May afternoon, jazz barely comes up, and Coltrane isn't mentioned once—although Ellison's strange surroundings are imbued with traces of Alice's mystical and meditative leanings.

LOST ANGELES

Ellison meets me at the main gate of his apartment building wearing a baby-blue polo shirt and a cabbie hat. He stands over six feet tall, and has a slight chin beard. As we shake hands, I immediately get the impression that everything this guy does is m-e-l-l-o-w.

I follow Ellison into the building, through a hallway covered in murals and party flyers, and into a massive outdoor courtyard. Wrapping around the open air, three levels of apartments box in the yard like a Vegas hotel; doors hang open, dormitory-style. Overlooking everything, a steel sculpture fans out in the shape of three sun rays, facing east. The place reeks of pot.

"Look at *this* shit," Ellison says, pointing to the right of the courtyard. I walk over and find an aquarium made of thick glass which houses a gigantic boa constrictor. It appears to be sleeping.

The sun is just beginning to set, so Ellison suggests we sit on the roof. As we head up, he tells me that the building is owned by an "old hippie" that designed the place to be an artist loft.

"I know this building is crazy to most people," Ellison says. "Even to people from the Valley. There's just nothing going on out here, especially motherfuckers being on some creative shit. All we got is porn—this is the porn capitol of the world. *Boogie Nights* took place down the street."

I squint west, as if they were still filming.

"I gotta take you to the donut shop where Don Cheadle does the robbery in that movie," he continues. "It's right around here. And you remember *American Beauty*? It's like that out here, too... the flip end of that. There's just not a lot of creativity. There's not a real scene. When I was growing up, I swore that I'd never live here. Fuck this Valley, man. It sucks! But my family is here and I found this crazy building. If I didn't have any of that, I'd be in Silver Lake or something."

He pauses for a minute. "You know what's weird, though? RZA lives right down the street."

"No shit? I thought he lived in New York."

"Yeah, me too," he replies. "But I saw him at this electronics store over by here a while ago. I remember thinking 'Oh... There's *that* guy.' But then—this is the trip part—I just did a tour with him in Europe. I geeked out at the last show we did and I asked him what the sample from 'Ice Cream' was. He was like, 'I don't even know, man.' I honestly think he forgot. That dude is a space cadet—he was in the stars."

" I H A D M Y T A S T E O F T H E C L U B S H I T

I T W A S F U N . . .



B U T I R E A L I Z E D

T H A T S H I T I S B U L L L L L W I N K L E .

M U S I C I S A L I T T L E M O R E S P I R I T U A L F O R M E . "



"A LOT OF THINGS HAPPEN BY ACCIDENT,
AND I EMBRACE THAT."

"Do you like touring? Doing the club circuit and all that?" I ask.

"I had my taste of the club shit. It was fun," he says. "They let me play the same party as Justice? Okay, that's what's up. But I realized that shit is *bullllll*winkle. Music is a little more spiritual for me. I never did this with the intention of having it played in clubs. I'm not trying to get all caught up in scenes and things."

"You're not gonna ride out this 'wonk-hop' wave, then?" I ask, joking.

Ellison lets out a forced laugh. "I don't know about that shit," he says, shaking his head. "A lot of things happen by accident, and I embrace that. Like Bob Ross, man... I just roll with it. But now, any kid can turn on a computer and, like, *not* sequence this shit. So I know it's my position to take the music and do something else with it."

The sun has almost set. Ellison and I head downstairs to look at his bedroom studio. When we walk in, his apartment is dark, except for the flickering lights of a projector. Beaming on the entire right wall is a silent Japanese monster movie. In the corner is a case of DVDs, double-stacked and six feet high. His production desk sits to the far left.

"Do you leave these movies running all the time?" I ask.

"Yeah, I leave them on when I'm working."

Ellison replies. He's fiddling around with something in the kitchen, so I continue looking through the DVDs. *Ahh, yes, the original version of The Wicker Man.*

Moments later, he emerges with a giant blunt in his hands. "You smoke trees?"

HAZY SHADES

After I systematically lose (and find) every one of my personal effects in Ellison's apartment, we go for a drive.

"I'm gonna play you some Samiyam," Ellison says as we drop into his car, and he cues up an off-kilter magic carpet of beats knit together by his good friend and neighbor, Sam "Samiyam" Baker (a recent transplant from Ann Arbor, Michigan). "I'll play you some Ras G too," he continues. "Both of these guys are on my label [Brainfeeder]."

As we slip out on the road towards Mulholland Drive, a blanket of burning static spreads across the open space of the car, flanging back and forth, moving in waves. Ellison edges the sound up higher, and the swells burst into a ghostly moan, filling the last shreds of remaining space. The volume becomes immense, almost too loud... on the border of punishment. And then, the blanket collapses—punched through by bass hits that get swallowed up as soon as they decay.

Ellison explains the beat is unfinished, something he and Baker have been working on under their Flyamsam alias.



"How'd you meet all these other L.A. producers?" I yell over the music. Ellison quickly scans through a couple tracks on his iPod, and turns the volume down.

"Motherfuckers just hung at the Little Temple, this club [in Silver Lake]," he drawls. "There was two cool nights—one was called Sketchbook, the other was called Together. On any given night, you'd see Carlos Niño, Ras G, Gaslamp Killer, Diabolic Dibiase, Georgia [Anne Muldrow], Daedelus, Coleman. It was a beat cypher! We'd hang out, and every week we'd *all* have some new shit. It was like homework for us. I think that's how the whole community started on the beat tip—the thing I'm kinda part of."

"Were you trading secrets?"

"No man, it was like a sport!" Ellison says, taking a hard turn. "But there was no hating on anyone's shit, because *everybody* had crazy shit. We'd all go home mad inspired."

He pauses, fishing around for his iPod. "Now it's a little different. Everyone's a lot busier."

Ellison and I continue up through the Hollywood Hills, past Santa Monica, and eventually back east, towards the Valley. With every straightaway, he punches the gas, carving wide-angled swoops through the road, like he was flying a space ship.

As we approach Winnetka, we stop at a long traffic light. Ellison turns down the music. "Look here," he says, pointing to left and right. "Medicinal marijuana."


On the left is a small clinic called Northridge, and on the right T.H.C. (Today's Health Care). Two weed clinics battling it out for corner supremacy. They probably used to be gas stations.

"I heard you can get a medicinal license out here for political reasons," I say. "A friend of mine claims he got his license as a *means of protest*."

"That doesn't surprise me at all," Ellison says. "Look around you. There's nothing else for motherfuckers to do out here."

I follow his advice and gaze out, past the clinics, into the red and yellow neon lights. And somewhere, deep in that sprawl, maybe blocks or miles away, I can just barely see a Carl's Jr.

Flying Lotus' *Los Angeles* is out now on Warp Records.
flying-lotus.com, warprecords.com

 Flying Lotus speaks on Coltrane, Mr. Oizo, Martyn, and more! Visit XLR8R.com/119extras.

BEAT DOWN FLYING LOTUS' FAVORITE SOURCES FOR INSANE NEW RHYTHMS.



BRAINFEDDER

My new digital label. With folks like Samiyam, Ras G, and more, we promise to bring forth the raw shit that people have been missing in their lives.

WARP

Have to throw it up for the team. These folks need no introduction. If you don't know about Warp by now, just read on to some other shit. These people have been making history for years.

HYPERDUB

Probably my favorite label at the moment—Kode9 is a silent visionary. He has single-handedly put out some of the most FWD (ahem) electronic music of the past few years.

PLUG RESEARCH

The little giant! I love that Plug Research gets bored with things they've already done. They're always looking ahead, always willing to take a chance on a new sound. The most ambitious label in L.A.

ALPHA PUP

Daddy Kev is one of the kings of L.A. He throws one of the best parties to ever hit the planet (Low End Theory), not to mention the man's been making insane productions for over a decade. Somewhere in that schedule, he has enough time to run this heavy-hitting label.



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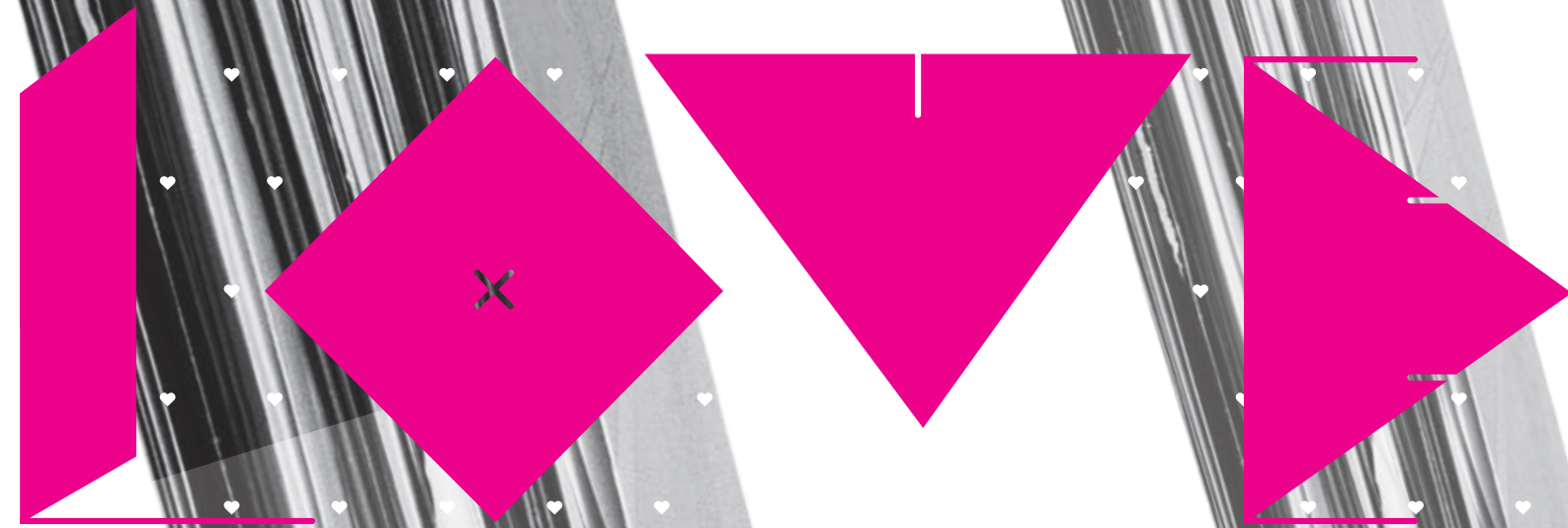
J*DaVeY
*The Land Of
 The Lost*



Shaya
Fallen Awake



Eyezoon & Sean Lane
A People Like Us



If you're reading *XLR8R* you probably already own 'nuff albums on XL or Domino, Def Jux and Lex artists have repeatedly rocked your headphones, and you know what's coming out on Minus or Stones Throw before we do. So this year—our seventh time loving on labels—we focus on labels

we've (mostly) never quizzed before. We catch up with brash new dancefloor igniters Fool's Gold and Dress 2 Sweat, techno champions Mobilee and Traum, and the dubstep damage squad: Hyperdub, Tectonic, Hot Flush. We revel in cosmic disco from Ghent and New Jersey, and applaud local pride from Los

Angeles to Dublin. And since some of the labels we love are more obscure than, say, Sub Pop or DFA, we highlight five artists for you to check, and 10 labels we'll be keeping an ear on in the year to come. Read on for evil cat mascots, 50 Euro spliffs, and a Mole in a harness!
Vivian Host and Ken Taylor



PICTURED FROM LEFT: ~SCAPE, FEDELITY, 4LUX, INNERVISIONS, HYPERDUB



~SCAPE

Pole's unstoppable dub-tech team.

Founders: Stefan "Pole" Betke and Barbara Preisinger

Location: Kreuzberg and Prenzlauer Berg, Berlin, Germany

Best-known artists: Pole, Deadbeat, Jan Jelinek

Funny story: Pole was supposed to play a late-night show at a big festival. He arrived shortly before his set and the bouncer wouldn't let him in, saying that there were at least three or four Poles already in, and the real Pole would now have to buy the day ticket, which was 50 pounds.

Favorite label: There are so many other labels that we love and respect.

Happy-hour spot: Club der Visionaere. It's very nice to sit on the water having a cool drink and meeting people.

Label mascot: Our little Hawaiian palm tree.

Biggest disaster: On the *Staedtizm 4* compilation, one of our artists referred to a track by Fatback Band as a tribute and we got sued by the publisher. We had to call the whole release back shortly after street date and lost a lot of money—though *Staedtizm 4* was a great record.

Upcoming: Reissues of Pole's 1, 2, 3 trilogy, a few 12"s by Pole, and a new *Round Black Ghosts* compilation in late fall.

scape-music.de

FEDELITY / STRØMLAND

Lindstrøm spreads his wings from Norway to San Francisco.

Founder: Hans-Peter Lindstrøm (with Joakim Haugland for Strømland)

Location: Oslo, Norway

Best-known artists: Lindstrøm, Six Cups of Rebel, Plague the Kid

Funny story: [Our best known artists are] all the same person!

Favorite label: Smalltown Supersound

Happy-hour spot: Tim Wendelboe Coffeabar in Grunersgate. Simply the best coffee in Scandinavia!

Label mascot: Jesus Christ in bright neon colors.

Biggest disaster: There haven't been any... yet.

Upcoming: The new Lindstrøm album comes out this month, and the debut album by Christabelle might see the light of day in late 2008.

feedelity.com

INNERVISIONS

Lush house and future funk from Sonar Kollektiv's lovechild.

Founders: Dixon, Matthias Bombach, and Frank and Kristian from Âme.

Location: Friedrichstrasse, Berlin, Germany

Best-known artists: Henrik Schwarz, Château Flight, Tokyo Black Star

Funny story: A certain DJ keeps on losing his mobile phone all over this planet and spends hours getting people to send it back to him. Well, actually it is Matthias who has to do this for him... It's a neverending story and far from being funny anymore. Fact!

Favorite label: All the labels that really care about the music, take risks, and don't release things that they don't dig.

Happy-hour spot: The little Italian sandwich and coffeeshop across the street. Heavily supported!

Label mascot: Niko Bellic and Darth Vader!

Biggest disaster: We manufactured a special package for our *Muting the Noise* CD. It's a high-quality, debossed linen book with 60 pages that contain nothing at all. We muted all the noise! In addition, we successfully managed to hide the CD and make it as hard as possible for people to get out. You should see the faces of the people who open that package!

Upcoming: New music from Âme (with Henrik Schwarz & Dixon) and Laurent Garnier, and a Tokyo Black Star album.

innercityvisions.com

4LUX

Dutch downtempo fiends top our list for future jazz grooves.

Founder: Gerd

Location: Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Best-known artists: Gerd, Amplified Orchestra, Delgui

Funny story: Syrafin had to do a remix. It was 2 a.m. and the remix would be picked up by courier at 9. He had no inspiration, so he wanted to smoke a spliff—he had loads of weed but no papers. Desperate, he took his only 50 Euro bill from his wallet and rolled a spliff with it. What followed was his most expensive, and dopest, remix ever: "The Game is Mine (feat. JTodd)"

Favorite label: Too many to mention.

Happy-hour spot: Bootleg Café at the Mauritsweg in the center of Rotterdam. A place where the cocktails are delicious and the ladies are fly.

Label mascot: Our neighbor's cat, Fenna, who naps on our studio couch while we are in a recording session. Lazy creature!

Biggest disaster: Syrafin and I were traveling to a show in Belgium. While queueing outside of the train station's bank, there was a huge explosion.

Somebody had bombed the bank's wall. Police drew their guns and an immense fire fight followed. We ducked on the floor while bullets flew around our ears. The robber got out of the bank and passed us before he was shot in the knee. There was money still floating in the air. Before we knew it, we were on the train counting our Euros. We bought ourselves two Mac Powerbooks with the loot, compensation for our tragic adventure.

Upcoming: Aqeel's "Wake Up" (feat. Shafiq Husayn of Sa-Ra), the *4lux Sub Soul Sampler*, and [d]'s *The Greatest Never* featuring Elzhi of Slum Village, Guilty Simpson, Muhsinah, and Buff-1.

4lux.com

DOMINIQUE LEONE

Feedelity encourages an avant-pop experimenter to kick out the prog,

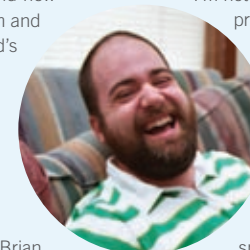
Dominique Leone, 34, is an inspiration to any unsigned artist at home twiddling with a four-track. Two years ago, the San Francisco-based music scribe (and lifelong musician) cold-called Hans-Peter Lindstrøm with the hopes the space-disco pioneer might dig his tunes. "I just really liked the singles that he was putting out at the time. So I wrote him and said, 'I would really love if you would listen to my stuff and see if you'd be interested in doing a remix of any of it,'" recalls Leone. "To my great surprise and good fortune he not only wanted to remix it, he wanted

to release it." The resulting album, *Dominique Leone*, came out in May on Strømland, the brand-new imprint from Lindstrøm and Smalltown Supersound's Joakim Haugland.

Leone's sound doesn't exactly mirror the orbital bounce of his European pals—it's a much more organic strand of collage pop that references Abba, Brian Wilson, prog-rock luminaries

Magma, and noise bands like Japan's Ruins. "I just kind of write what I write—I'm not really thinking I want to make a prog song, per se... but you can't really escape where you come from, I guess," he muses.

Leone's a self-described "analytical" dude ("[That's] probably why I wrote for as long as I did," he says), and his music sounds like the product of someone who's spent lots of time thinking critically about music. On kaleidoscopic tracks



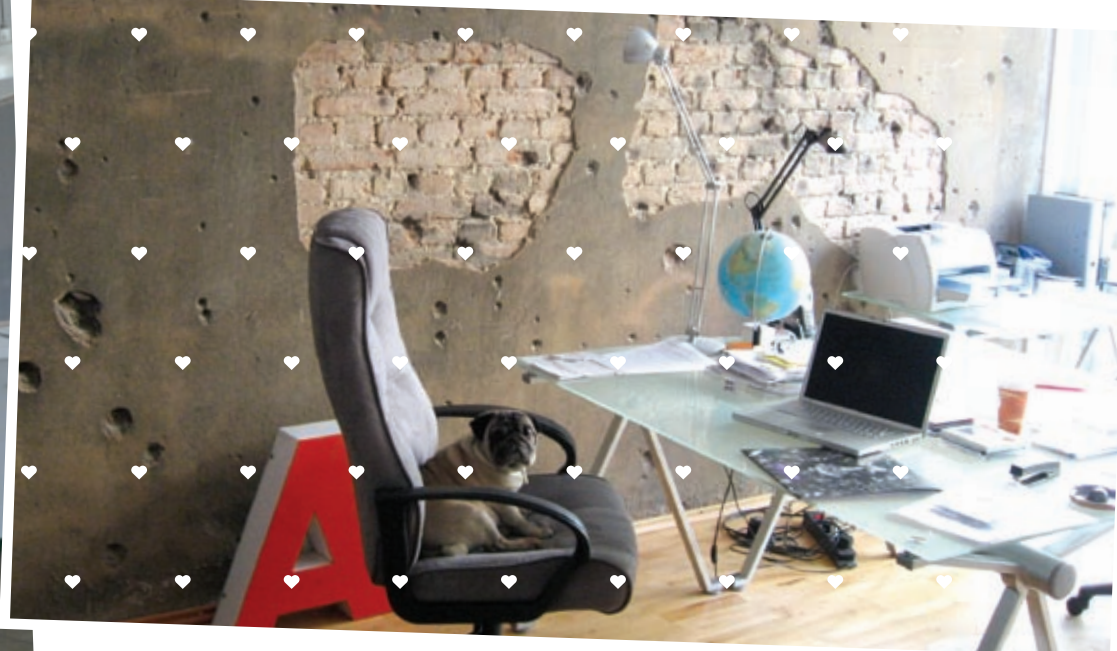
like "Duyen" and "Claire," he sings atop swirling layers of organ and found sounds that recall Animal Collective's twisted folk. These tracks predate Leone using a computer for production, but the 34-year-old producer recently netted himself a laptop and is burning through tracks. "Hopefully I can follow [this album] up with another one with newer stuff [soon]," he says. *Joe Cally*

Dominique Leone is out now on Strømland. dominiqueleone.com





PICTURED FROM LEFT: FOOL'S GOLD, MAD DECENT, MOBILEE, SMALLTOWN SUPERSOUND



FOOLS GOLD

Clever rap + catchy remixes + cute artwork for the new-gen urban dancefloor.

Founders: DJs A-Trak and Nick Catchdubs, along with resident art genius Dust La Rock and life coach Dave1.

Location: Brooklyn, baby.

Best-known artists: Kid Sister, A-Trak, Kid Cudi

Funny story: All the really good stories will get us in trouble. What happens in Canada stays in Canada.

Favorite label: Polo

Happy-hour spot: You can find Dust dropping BMX knowledge at East River Bar, right down the street in Williamsburg. Odds are the rest of us are ripping open an Emergen-C at home.

Label mascot: Sammy Bananas' mustache.

Biggest disaster: Five giant boxes of Fool's Gold x Dim Mak tour shirts arriving in New York after we're already halfway done with the tour.

Upcoming: Debut singles from Treasure Fingers, LA Riots, Nacho Lovers, and Trackademicks, Kid Sister's album, a label remix CD through Scion, temporary tattoos...

foolsgoldrecs.com

MAD DECENT

Big party personalities blur the lines between dancehall, blog house, B-more, and more.

Founder: Diplo

Location: A former mausoleum at 12th and Spring Garden in Philadelphia.

Best-known artists: Diplo, Bonde Do Role, Blaqstarr & Rye Rye

Funny story: After a Blaqstarr performance you can find him on the floor moving watches and even sedans from Baltimore.

Favorite labels: Soul Jazz, Pop Art

Office happy-hour spot: It's always happy hour at the office but we spend a lot of time on the corner, too.

Office mascot: "Snitch" the magical turtle and Squiggly Dancer Guys 1 and 2.

Biggest label disaster: Starting it!

Upcoming releases: A Santogold x Diplo mixtape, EPs from Crookers and Boy 8-Bit, and Paper Route Gangstaz's *Fear and Loathing in Huntsvegas*.

maddecents.com

MOBILEE

Longtime Berlin party people hold it down for the new-wave minimal movement.

Founders: Anja Schneider and Ralf Kollmann

Location: The Mitte area of Berlin, Germany

Best-known artists: Pan-Pot, Sebo K, Anja Schneider

Funny story: Guess who this is: "Naaaa, und? Alles klar? Wie geht's? Alles fit?"

And who says this: "Ela, man!" Little hint. It's not Dolce and Gabbana. Send the correct answer to Mobilee and you'll get a special surprise package.

Favorite label: We're pretty tight with Leena Music.

Happy-hour spot: The little pizza restaurant around the corner. We always order the Pizza Segantini and the waitress always gets nervous when we have some "famous" DJ friends with us. And the Lexington shop on our street has the best American cheesecake on earth served by the coolest American "dude." Mobilee is getting fat!

Label mascot: Vincenzo! Sometimes he takes care of the whole office and studio complex eight days a week.

Biggest disaster: Anja's birthday party ended up at a private apartment with 40 people. I think the guy had to move out a month later...

Upcoming: A new Gummi H2 this month, Marcin Czubala's first album in years next month, followed by a huge label party and new stuff from Sebo K and Pan-Pot.

mobilee-records.de

SMALLTOWN SUPERSOUND

Norwegian eclecticism, from ambient collage to future folk to leftfield disco trips.

Founder: Joakim Haugland

Location: Oslo, Norway

Best-known artists: Lindström, Kim Hiorthøy, Bjørn Torske

Funny story: One of our first bands, Epikurs Euforie, had many strange ideas. One of the members wore all his clothes at the same time when going on tour instead of packing a bag, and then took them off as the days went by. They also tried to hypnotize the audience with a giant pendulum.

Favorite label: SST in the '80s and the early years of Rough Trade were pretty magical.

Happy-hour spot: Bar Robinet. It's run by our friend David. He keeps a copy of our Paal Nilssen Love and Mats Gustafsson record *I Love It When You Snore* behind the bar with a note on it that says: "Don't throw away. For use against bad people."

Biggest disaster: This year at SXSW we missed a Motörhead show because we didn't understand that 3 p.m. meant during the day. That was pretty bad.

Upcoming: Lindström's *Where You Go I Go Too*, Tussle's *Cream Cuts*, Serena-Maneesh's *S-M Backwards*, and The Meanderthals' *Desire Lines*.

smalltownsupersound.com

JOKERS OF THE SCENE

Fool's Gold's irreverent Canadians somehow make trance cool.

The latest entry on the scene some have nefariously called "blog house" are Canadians Linus "DJ Booth" Booth, 36, and Chris "Chameleonic" Macintyre, 27. For the last five years, the self-deprecating duo—one likes hardcore punk and greyhounds, the other embroidered jeans and hot tea—have been known for throwing Ottawa's best monthly, Disorganised (it's not really disorganized). Now the world is beginning to recognize them instead by their production alias, Jokers of the Scene (a.k.a. JOTS).

The pair of "mad music nerds" met in a record shop Booth used to own, so it's not surprising their road-trip

playlists run the gamut "from Brian Wilson to Godflesh to Arthur Russell to Alter Ego," and they count techno pioneers like CJ Bolland and LFO's Mark Bell as influences. Nonetheless, the predominate sound of many of their recent tracks is '90s dance. A remix of Nacho Lovers' "Go On" cuts up house diva samples with hollow Nightcrawlers-esque bass, while a take on South Rakkas Crew's "Mad Again"

disembodies ragga chat and pastes it over a panoply of skyward-stabbing synths and squelching key arpeggios even Paul Van Dyk could appreciate.

And then there's "Baggy Bottom Boys," a strobes-and-lasers rave up whose summer-of-'92 breakdown is full of Ecstasy pianos and crowds cheering. "The tune practically wrote itself and it really defined the JOTS sound," says Booth.

With no less than eight releases issuing forth in the coming months, including remixes for Muscles, Destroy Disco, and Canadian

homies Thunderheist, there are plenty of directions for JOTS' sound to grow. But don't expect the pair to get Oakenfold-size egos quite yet. "We came from a scene where not too much was going on in the first place, so we never really had any expectations of this growing beyond what it started as," says Booth. "Any successes are always a pleasant surprise." *Tyra Bangs*

Jokers of the Scene's Acidbagg EP is out now on Fools Gold. myspace.com/sceneofthekjoker





PICTURED FROM LEFT: TECTONIC, ILLEGAL ART, WAGON REPAIR, STRUT.

HOTFLUSH

Exploring the murky depths of IDM, dubstep, and aquatic sub-bass.

Founders: Paul Rose and El Sid (now departed).

Location: London, England (and Berlin and Boston)

Best-known artists: Scuba, Boxcutter, Benga & Walsh

Funny story: We don't have funny stories at Hotflush—we are a serious label. Very serious. Very.

Favorite labels: Skull Disco, Hesse Audio, Scion Versions

Happy-hour spot: Everyone who works for the label lives in different cities so we don't really have one! We have virtual beers on AIM.

Label mascot: The weirdly angled wall that screws up my mixdowns.

Biggest disaster: The metalwork to a ton of our releases got lost. That was great.

Upcoming: The next in our series of free mix downloads, techno and dubstep remixes from the Scuba album, and a very good brand new artist.

hotflushrecordings.com

TECTONIC

Bassbin-shattering future dub for the dark and moody.

Founders: DJ Pinch, with help from Ginz, Fidz, and Jabba

Location: Bristol, U.K.

Best-known artists: 2562, Cyrus, DJ Pinch

Funny story: Cyrus and I got to walk the red carpet to the London film premiere of *Children of Men* (we both had Tectonic tracks feature in the film, hence the invite). I did my best to hide the fact that I'd sprained my ankle, walking with a bit of a pimped-out rude-boy swagger. The photographers were quick to stop taking photos when we got near...

Favorite label: Basic Channel. They went against the norms of typical record label practices and put out some of the most incredible sounds I've ever heard. I love how they left each release fairly anonymous and as soon as they reached a degree of popularity, shut up shop and moved on to something else.

Happy-hour spot: We're all glad to see the back of one another come 6 p.m.

Label mascot: Two evil cats, Neep and Parsnip, plague the office from time to time. They hope to take over one day—you can see it in their eyes.

Biggest disaster: The aforementioned cats pull the phone cord from the wall socket in the middle of important international telephone calls.

Upcoming: Skream's "Head Banger," remixes of DJ Pinch's "Get Up feat. Yolanda," and *Tectonic Plates Vol. 2* later in the year.

tectonicrecordings.com

ILLEGAL ART

Girl Talk's homebase slaps copyright cops in the face.

Founder: Philo T. Farnsworth

Location: Bloomington, IL

Best-known artists: Steinski, Girl Talk, Wobbly (And we once had a compilation that included Public Enemy by permission.)

Funny story: The Australian artist B'O'K (Buttress O'Kneel) only communicates with me through another person, so I'm not even sure if she really exists or is the creation of this other individual, who also operates under an alias.

Favorite labels: Blackbean and Placenta Tape Club. It no longer exists, but the guy who ran it inspired me and answered all my questions about running a label. I loved their philosophy and approach. I wish we were as cool as them.

Happy-hour spot: We have kids. Happy hour doesn't happen. We do love the traditional Mexican food at El Porton on Main Street.

Label mascot: Our water frog, Clover.

Biggest disaster: We got caught with a manufacturer for samples and they confiscated all of the printed parts they had already made. They then forced me to write a letter saying that I had misinterpreted copyright law and that I now recognized the error of my ways. If I didn't sign the document they threatened to not return our money for the parts they had yet to make and would report us to the RIAA.

Upcoming: Girl Talk's new album is out this month.

illegalart.net



WAGON REPAIR

Cheeky house and techno pushes jazz and dub's buttons.

Founders: Mathew Jonson, Jesse Fisk, and Graham Boothby

Location: Originally from Vancouver; now half-based in Berlin.

Best-known artists: Cobblestone Jazz, Konrad Black, The Mole

Funny story: We were having a house party at Mathew Jonson's summer flat in Berlin. He was on the sixth floor of the building and had an industrial crane to move heavy things up and down the side of the building. We strapped The Mole into a window-washing harness and he climbed up the side of the building from the ground floor! It was crazy, to say the least.

Favorite label: !K7. They release Cobblestone Jazz digitally and on CD, while we take care of vinyl.

Happy-hour spot: Irish Heather in Vancouver's Gastown. It seems like half the time we are in the city it's at this place drinking Guinness and Jameson whiskey.

Label mascot: We don't need a mascot. We're all fucking maniacs.

Biggest disaster: Trashing our record booth at Sonar was fun.

Upcoming: Albums from Luca Bacchetti and Deadbeat & Tikiman, plus more records from Hrdvsnion, Minilogue, Sex Trothler, Loose Change, and more.

wagonrepair.ca



STRUT

London's disco-not-disco diggers return with a vengeance.

Founders: Quinton Scott and Sean Langford

Location: East London, UK, and Berlin (at !K7 Records HQ).

Best-known artists: Grandmaster Flash, August Darnell (a.k.a. Kid Creole), and various compilation series including *Disco Not Disco* and *Nigeria 70*.

Funny story: We licensed a track from a U.S. radio DJ called Shad O'Shea. He wrote regular chatty letters to us on massive A3 sheets from his border collie, complete with dog photo letterhead. He signed the contract with a paw print.

Favorite label: Probably ECM

Happy-hour spot: I [Quinton] work at home so, sadly, the local Esso service station for a coffee or outside my front door chatting to neighbors.

Label mascot: Next door's moody cat often wanders in when there's music on. It likes Afrobeat, not too keen on disco.

Biggest disaster: I'd say New Year's Eve at The Rocket in North London, 2002, about 600 capacity. Ten people showed up, we closed the main room and did a DIY party in the small side bar. Witnessed vague foot shuffling at midnight during Chicago's "Street Player" before throwing in the towel.

Upcoming: *Calypsoul 70*, a compilation of rare Caribbean soul and calypso fusion, a new DJ-led series digging out original electro and new wave called *Disconnection*, and the new Grandmaster Flash studio album.

strut-records.com

PEVERELIST

A Tectonic artist gets Punch Drunk off that deep and dubby Bristol bass.

If drum & bass and breakbeat science formed the basis of rhythmic danger throughout the 1990s, it's the rumble and swing of producers like Bristol's Peverelist (a.k.a. Tom Ford) that carries on the tradition. Drawing from U.K. garage, jungle, and the hypnotic end of techno, Peverelist is unquestionably a dubstep artist, yet his tracks diverge from the half-step plod that became standard in the scene last year. Instead, Peverelist's propulsion comes from broken, rolling kicks and staggered chords, an effect that seemingly shifts chunks of rhythm

right off the grid.

"The dubstep scene grew up on jungle, garage, drum & bass, and grime—that's what we all have in common," says Ford. "It's the U.K. soundsystem culture that's the heritage of the scene, and [I think] we're all on quite a futurist vibe. But I guess my sound is more jungle-inspired... more bass-driven."

Bristol boasts a laundry list of

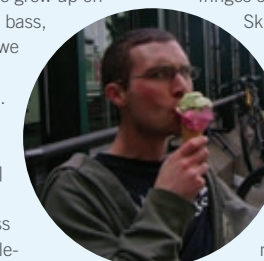
producers operating on the experimental fringes of dubstep—artists like

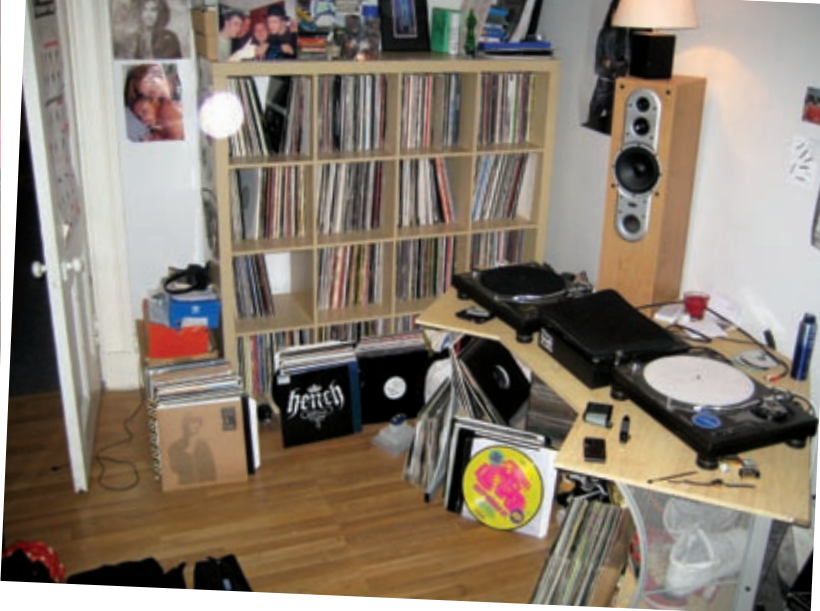
Skull Disco's Appleblim and Shackleton, Tectonic's Pinch, and new talent like RSD and Forsaken, who Ford has released on his own label, Punch Drunk. You can often find any combination of these producers DJing at Routed Records, the mythologized specialty shop Ford operates.

"It amazes me how people so far away

can be so into and so knowledgeable about something which I see as small and localized," marvels Ford. "I'm just making beats in my bedroom to play to my mates at dances in Bristol! And if people in the U.S. or anywhere else are into it, that's great. Maybe this is the next chapter?" *Brandon Ivers*

RSD's "Jah Way" b/w "Speeka Box" is out now. myspace.com/punchdrunkrecords





PICTURED FROM LEFT: WE ARE FREE, ALPHA PUP, DRESS 2 SWEAT, LAST GANG

WE ARE FREE

A Baltimore indie shows much promise for 2009.

Founders: Jason Foster and Sir James Winnie

Location: Baltimore, MD

Best-known artists: Yeasayer, Indian Jewelry, and Ponytail.

That is all of them!

Funny story: Molly from Ponytail climbed up on stage with two of the Hanson brothers at this “jam session” at last year’s SXSW. She was clanging two beer bottles together and she got so excited that she smashed them to pieces. With a look of fear, a wrangler pulled her from the stage, which is hilarious because Molly is like a cuddly koala bear. That night was really a blast and what really set the tone for We Are Free.

Favorite label: UP Records out of Seattle really inspired me to get into the very expensive hobby of record labeling.

Happy-hour spot: I highly recommend Dizzy Izzie’s, the best bar in Baltimore (run by the amazing Elaine), or Rocket to Venus.

Label mascot: Modulok

Biggest disaster: We don’t have disasters, just learning experiences. That was pretty hippie, huh? The label was a struggle in the beginning because I was working 60-plus hours a week on a television show in order to fund it.

Upcoming: Vinyl releases from both Yeasayer and Ponytail plus trying to re-release the first Genesis album, *From Genesis to Revelation*, here in the States.

nowwearefree.com

ITALIANS DO IT BETTER

Noise label Troubleman Unlimited bows to its founder’s Italo-disco obsession.

Founder: Mike Simonetti and Johnny Jewel

Location: Bayonne, NJ and Portland, OR

Best-known artists: Glass Candy, Chromatics, Farah

Funny story: We recently went to see *Ironman* together on a day off in Brighton, U.K. That’s not funny, but the fact that the movie was so underwhelming was—and we paid nine pounds to see it (plus snacks). \$18 U.S.!

Favorite labels: American Tapes and Hospital Productions

Happy-hour spot: My refrigerator, currently in Jersey City. I [Mike] work during happy hour! I believe Johnny does as well.

Label mascot: Milhouse and Marlon

Biggest disaster: We think every step we take is a learning experience. We don’t consider them disasters.

Upcoming: Vinyl versions of *After Dark*, *Nite Drive*, and *Beat Box*, as well as new 12s from Farah, Mirage, Glass Candy, Chromatics, a new compilation, and some other secret projects.

vivaitalians.blogspot.com

ALPHA PUP

Weird-hop, kicks, and glitches in the club.

Founders: Danyell Jariel and Daddy Kev

Location: Downtown Los Angeles, 5th and Spring, The Nickel.

Best-known artists: edIT, Daedelus, AWOL One

Funny story: Recently, edIT’s laptop was stolen in Denver (not funny). It was recovered a few days later after he paid a \$1,000 ransom (not funny either). What’s funny is that the idiot who stole the laptop used Firefox for a few days and didn’t clear the browser cache, so edIT had access to the thief’s Gmail account, which in turn revealed his name, home address, and phone number.

Favorite label: Red Rocket Entertainment

Happy-hour spot: Mt. Washington Compassionate Caregivers. We’re not big drinkers, but we do inhale.

Label mascot: Izzy, our golden brown dachshund/chihuahua pup.

Biggest disaster: That we still press up CDs in 2008.

Upcoming: Reefer (the Nick Thorburn and Daddy Kev super-duo) in September, followed by full-lengths from Nocando and Existereo by the end of the year.

alphapuprecords.com

DRESS 2 SWEAT

A Scottish newcomer pairs European dancefloor upstarts with ghetto bass legends.

Founder: Jack “Jackmaster” Revill

Location: Glasgow, Scotland

Best-known artists: Rustie, DJ Deeon, Kazey & Bulldog

Funny story: Me and Rustie were DJing in Zaragoza and the hotel room smelt 100% like burnt pubic hair. It was unreal. Guys can front if they like, but if a dude says he’s never tried burning his pubes... he is lying.

Favorite labels: Warner Brothers (for Prince), Underground Resistance (for Drexciya), and Unruly for the B-more stuff.

Happy-hour spot: All of the Rubadub fam go to Macsorley’s to get drunk almost every night. Glaswegians love beer. One time I dropped a double cheeseburger off of the balcony. It was like the scene from *Trainspotting* where Begbie throws a pint over the balcony, but much more embarrassing because I had to go pick it up.

Label mascot: STD (a.k.a. Skud the Dug)

Biggest disaster: DJ Ayres got upset because our first release looked a little like one of his releases he did with Ammo Records. That wasn’t good.

Upcoming: Debonair Samir’s *Next Level Club* EP plus new joints from Kazey & Bulldog and DJ Deeon.

myspace.com/dress2sweat

LAST GANG

Toronto indie kings balance their rockier side with tough electro.

Founders: Chris Taylor and Donald Tarlton

Location: Offices in Toronto, Montreal, and Los Angeles

Best-known artists: Metric, MSTRKRFT, Crystal Castles

Funny story: Our real first signing was O’luge. It’s taken him five years to finish the record but, like fine wine, classic reggae music takes time.

Favorite label: Vice Records

Happy-hour spot: Brazen Head [Toronto]. It’s within crawling distance from the office with huge outdoor patios. Just stay away from the railing and don’t feed the artists!

Label mascot: Kayla, Ben, and Jesse—the interns with superhero powers.

Biggest disaster: From Fiction did an epic record with Steve Albini and we booked the band their first big tour (six weeks). The band broke up as soon as the tour came together due to the drummer’s exit. He said he never expected things to happen for the band and expected to play basement parties for the rest of his life. Death From Above 1979 scored the NIN/Queens of the Stone Age tour and broke up immediately thereafter.

Upcoming: LPs from Terry Lynn, Let’s Go to War, O’luge, and Mother Mother.

lastgangrecords.com

INDIAN JEWELRY

We Are Free’s wasteland-bred wizards of beautiful noise.

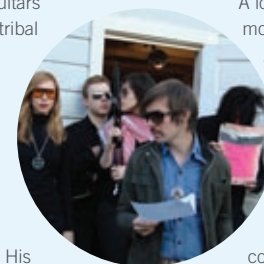
“Houston is a concrete wasteland,” says Brandon Davidson, guitarist for Indian Jewelry. “It’s a good place to be from—as in, not living there anymore.” Davidson is standing with the rest of Indian Jewelry, Erika Thrasher and Tex Kerschen, in the stinking alley outside of San Francisco’s Hemlock Tavern after a recent show. They’ve moved around in the past few years, to Los Angeles, Queens, and even the van that Erika and Tex currently call home, but all three are originally from the oil-drenched Texas metropolis.

Free Gold!, Indian Jewelry’s latest album (and its first for Baltimore

label We Are Free), almost sounds like the product of a wasteland—ferocious, distorted synths and guitars growl over propulsive, tribal beats—except that it’s threaded with blissful vocals and peaceful moments. “We really are trying to create something beautiful,” says Kerschen, the mustachioed, sort-of-frontman of the group. His confidence in that statement is so unflinching that, even at the band’s

noisiest moments, it’s hard not to believe him.

A lot of that beauty comes from the most soft-spoken member of the group, Erika Thrasher, whose vocals seem to float above the sometimes messy, crashing tunes. Her stage presence is equally incongruous; her long, blonde locks undulate meditatively over a table of sequencers and MIDI controllers while Tex and Brandon wield swinging guitars and pound rhythms along with her programmed



beats. The tension between these two elements makes for a mesmerizing show and a killer new album.

You never know who might have played on an Indian Jewelry jam—*Free Gold!* credits the talents of Ronnie Rodriguez, and the band says 20 or so people have played with them at one time or another. When pressed to clear this up, Thrasher coyly says, “Whoever is with us at the time is the core of Indian Jewelry.” *Wyatt Williams*

Free Gold! is out now on We Are Free. swarmofangels.com/indianjewelry



WATER MUSIC

The well never runs dry for Berkeley's high-class rock, pop, and world reissue imprint.

Founder: Filippo Salvadori

Location: Berkeley, CA

Best-known artists: Judee Sill, Cluster, Lee Hazlewood

Funny story: A few years back we were working on a release and sent a proof of the artwork to the artist. We kept the notes from a previous record as a temporary placeholder. The artist wrote back exclaiming that the booklet looked great and the notes were amazing! So we asked him, "Did you play on a bunch of Blue Note releases?" (No.) "Did you produce Herbie Hancock records?" (No.) "Then what the fuck are you talking about? You should have known these notes were not about you!"

Favorite label: Revenant

Happy-hour spot: Mario's La Fiesta, Berkeley

Label mascot: The Batman piñata.

Biggest disaster: Our website. It is a disaster and it's not even funny anymore.

Upcoming: Reissues from La Düsseldorf, Anne Briggs, Lee Hazlewood, Gilberto Gil, Scott Walker, Barbara Lynn, and Herbie Hancock.

rundtdistribution.com/water.html



TRAUM

Berlin techno stalwarts celebrate 10 years of serious beat-making.

Founders: Jacqueline and Riley Reinhold

Location: Cologne, Germany

Best-known artists: Dominik Eulberg, Moonbeam, Super Flu

Funny story: I [Riley] met Dominik in the Kompakt record shop years ago, which I was running at the time. He was blond and because we had a lot of techno tourists I spoke English to him, and he answered only with "Yes" or "No" in English. One week later I had 12 tracks of his on CD and was told we had a German student from Bonn!

Favorite label: Trapez

Happy-hour spot: We are not happy people. We work 'til dawn and go home.

Label mascot: An owl!

Biggest disaster: We had a Traum label night at Berlin's Berghain/Panoramabar and after my DJ set, I fell down on the stage, ripping down the curtain behind me. I tried to hide what I had done when the technician came... with my leg bleeding like hell.

Upcoming: New Super Flu EP this month, plus a new Dominik Eulberg 12" in September.

traumschallplatten.de



PICTURED FROM LEFT:
WATER, TRAUM,
SECRETLY CANADIAN

ESKIMO

Cosmic, Italo, outer space-underground disco lives on!

Founders: Dirk De Ruyck and Stefaan Vandenberghe

Location: Ghent, Belgium

Best-known artists: Lindstrøm & Prins Thomas, Aeroplane, Daniele Baldelli

Funny story: Daniele Baldelli is scared to fly. You need to book a night train to get him over to DJ. He's 54.

Favorite labels: DFA, Permanent Vacation.

Happy-hour spot: Don't have one.

Label mascot: It's Dirk!

Biggest disaster: Lotterboys! They split when the album came out!

Upcoming: Albums from Lindstrøm & Prins Thomas, Low Motion Disco, and Aeroplane

eskimorecordings.com

SECRETLY CANADIAN/ JAG JAGUWAR/ DEAD OCEANS

This three-label indie-rock juggernaut can only stay quiet for so long.

Founders: Darius Van Arman (Jagjaguwar); Jonathan Cargill, Ben Swanson, Chris Swanson (Secretly Canadian); everybody above plus Phil Waldorf (Dead Oceans).

Location: Bloomington, Indiana (except Phil, who lives in Austin, Texas).

Best-known artists: Antony and the Johnsons, Jens Lekman, Bon Iver

Funny story: An artist, who shall remain nameless, wanted us to buy them an old city bus and cut off the front face of it so they could tote it around the country as the backdrop for their live show.

Favorite labels: Mush, Håpna, El Saturn Records, Hip-O Select

Happy-hour spot: Uncle E's in Bloomington is a great bar/lounge that is gay-friendly, thus the vibe is great and laid-back. The bar recently relocated but it used to be in a double-wide trailer.

Label mascots: Clarence (cat), Bubba (cat), Kela (cat), The Beast (cat), Dan Burton (cat), and other random neighborhood cats.

Biggest disaster: We had a band send their masters via USPS. When the package arrived at the mastering studio, there were no tapes inside, just a weirdly repackaged envelope and a form letter from USPS saying that "We're sorry but the parcel was damaged in transit."

Upcoming: New albums from Lord Dog Bird, Oneida, Okkervil River, David Vandervelde, and The Donkeys
secretlycanadian.com, jagjaguwar.com, deadoceans.com

THE MOLE

Humid house and lascivious polyrhythms from a Wagon Repair party animal.

The Mole's basslines go where your lover won't. The Montreal producer born Colin De La Plante can transform an innocuous vocal stutter into an erotic mantra. After The Mole's legendary 2004 set at MUTEK, people appeared gloriously spent, as if in a post-orgy glow. This was disco more lubricious than Giorgio Moroder's wildest fantasies, but forged from an experimental-tribal-house perspective that lent it an edgier, more humid aura, its metronomic psychedelia springing from swaggering 4/4s that you hoped would lope indefinitely. Many producers use similar

techniques, but their music isn't nearly as mesmerizing and sensual. "I know that part of what makes a lot of my tunes interesting for me is the polyrhythms in the loops," says De La Plante. "They keep changing, and that gives it a psychedelic feeling. The main groove is still four-on-the-floor, but the hooks are moving around on top of that four. "I suppose the vinyl noise off



the samples has something to do with it," he adds, "especially when there are several room tones from recordings swinging around each other, popping in and out with the samples." The Mole's debut album, *As High as the Sky*, further hones his lascivious avant-garde disco, as he imbues the 11 tracks with copious amounts of soul, sexily torqued rhythms, and the most hypnotic vocal loops in dance music today. The LP, especially "Knock

Twice," should work wonders in clubs and boudoirs. De La Plante notes that the best thing about his Vancouver-based Wagon Repair labelmates is that they're "fellow hosers from the West Coast. The Wagon Repair team... take care of me and let me do my thing," he says. "They aren't worried about fashion or sales. [The label's] for friends, by friends... for the love of music." *Dave Segal*

As High as the Sky is out now on Wagon Repair.
myspace.com/eslamolita



MORE MORE MORE!

TEN LABELS WE'LL BE WATCHING OUT FOR THIS YEAR.

ALMOST GOLD

The name's not shy, and the music's not either. Catchy dance rock from Walter Meego and Does It Offend You, Yeah?, revisionist Brit pop from Black Kids, and the summer-fun stylings of Peter Bjorn and John.
almostgoldrecordings.com

ANTICIPATE

Drum & bass dudes turned minimal techno heads Ezekiel Honig and Morgan Packard head up this thoughtful label, where ambient and electro-acoustic experimentation from the likes of Klimek, Sawako, and Nicola Ratti is paired with equally cerebral and pretty packaging.
anticipaterecordings.com

ASTHMATIC KITTY

Since 1999, this eclectic indie has been exploring the outer edges of guitar rock, from My Brightest Diamond's and Sufjan Stevens' conceptual folk to the showtunes-inspired noise of Cryptacize.
asthmatickitty.com

CREAKED

Lausanne, Switzerland's experimental outpost has been around since 2004, but started to make serious noise late last year with challenging weirdo-pop from Starting Teeth, Larytta, and Mochipet.
creakedrecords.com

DOWNTOWN

An independent with distro from Warner, Downtown is quickly proving former Virgin A&R man Josh Deutsch's keen eye for future pop—the roster includes Santogold, Gnarls Barkley, Spank Rock, and Justice.
downtownmusic.com

KOCH

There's some corny crap on this huge indie-label conglomerate, but Koch's distribution allows indie hip-hop labels (Babygrande, No Limit, D-Block) and artists (Keak Da Sneak, C-Murder) to get their shine.
kochrecords.com

MADE TO PLAY

Jesse Rose's love song to stripped 'n' bumpy house is growing by leaps and bounds, with fidgety, cheeky, and loopy 4/4 coming from artists Trevor Loveys, Oliver \$, and Elon.
madetoplay.net

OSTGUT TON

The head-twisting sounds of Berlin's Panoramabar/Berghain club can be found here, as residents MyMy, Ben Klock, Cassy, and Marcel Dettmann show the world how twinky, up-all-night tech is done.
ostgut.de/ton

PERMANENT VACATION

Not the Aerosmith album, but a new-ish label from Munich! Space divas Sally Shapiro and Kathy Diamond and S.F. trio 40 Thieves are receiving rave reviews from scene stalwarts Tim Sweeney and Todd Terje.
permanent-vacation-records.com

UNRULY

This Charm City family remains at the forefront of the raw, bouncy, break-driven B-more club genre, with classic artists (Rod Lee, KW Griff) and future stars like King Tutt and Say Wut?.
unrulyonline.com



CONTEMPLATING THE CHANGING MODEL OF THE LABEL
WITH SUB POP'S JONATHAN PONEMAN AND RCRD LBL'S PETER ROJAS

WORDS KEN TAYLOR
PHOTOS PIPER FERGUSON (JONATHAN), SHAWN BRACKBILL (PETER)

As online labels and music blogs become the default means of discovering new music, is there still room for vinyl-and-CD purveyors in this web-obsessed world? On the occasion of Sub Pop's 20th anniversary we called up co-founder Jonathan Poneman, who ushered the Seattle label through the grunge era into its current incarnation as one of indie rock's most challenging and authoritative names, and Peter Rojas, creator of tech blogs Engadget and Gizmodo and founder of the game-changing, online-only RCRD LBL imprint, to talk it out.

XLR8R: Sub Pop has long been a record label in the traditional sense, and RCRD LBL is a new, online-only imprint. Do you guys see yourselves as playing on the same team?

Peter Rojas: I certainly do, in a sense that Sup Pop was sort of an inspiration for what we're trying to do with RCRD LBL—along with all the other labels I really cared about when I was growing up, like Dischord and Kill Rock Stars and Factory. What makes a label great is the sense that there are people doing it that actually are out there finding music that they love.

Jonathan Poneman: I draw inspiration from labels like RCRD LBL—it's that initial inspiration, that passion that drives individuals to get behind the music and represent the music in a way they find to be meaningful. Also, I am always impressed and inspired by people who are doing business in ways that are not as prehistoric [laughs]. While we try to be as progressive as we can, [Sub Pop] is, in fact, an old-fashioned record label. And I think that there's still a place for an old-fashioned record label in this world. But, like so many other people involved in our culture, I hold particular reverence for the new and what's coming up and to that degree, labels like RCRD LBL are keeping up with the future in ways I can only hope to attain myself.

When the advent of digital music sales came about, what was the feeling within Sub Pop?

JP: The first reaction was "uh-oh" and then we tried to do whatever we could to try and stamp it out. No, I'm kidding [laughs]. It was exciting because first and foremost, we're fans, we're consumers. The odd thing



"THERE'S STILL A PLACE FOR AN OLD-FASHIONED RECORD LABEL IN THIS WORLD."

-JONATHAN PONEMAN



is that we're trying to maintain and feed this paradigm as business people, which we don't always honor as music fans. Having said that, Sub Pop [negotiates] the many different communities and business models that exist right now as best as a label our age can. And I'm proud of that... As a fan first, I'm excited by new music delivery systems. I'm not always psyched about the quality, but it's not that much worse than CD. But I think the thing that should take precedence soon is just making sure that the actual fullness and richness of the music that gets recorded gets passed on to the consumer. And I'm not just indicting sound files here, but CDs as well.

PR: There's been a generational shift of what people care about in terms of audio quality, in many ways for the worse. Obviously there's no comparison when you talk about vinyl being sort of the paradigm. And being someone who was a big vinyl collector for a long time until I moved into a small New York apartment, there's obviously there's no comparison. I think there's a trade off with the MP3: You gain a lot of convenience, portability, and flexibility—and you sacrifice some sound quality. What I consider to be an encouraging trend is if you look at where things are going technologically speaking, in terms of hard-drive capacities and bandwidth, it will actually get easier and easier to offer higher and higher quality MP3s. It's encouraging to think that there might be a point where having sound files that are 100 MB in size won't be a big deal for users.

JP: The revolution has been about access and, as Pete stated, convenience. I don't think it's a generational thing myself. It could well be. But I think it's inevitable that once these other frontiers are traversed that we're going to start dealing with things that may just be considered as minutia at this point. But I think it really goes to the heart of art's creation, which is having music sound the way it's supposed to.

PR: One of the things I really like about the shift toward digital files that you can get online... it has in a lot of ways democratized the consumption of music. It used to be, as a record collector, you sort of lorded your collection over other people. And that isn't as meaningful [now]. In some ways it is this shrinking subset of über-collectors, but I think for most people, the idea that you would have a collection of music that would be exclusive to you, that someone couldn't just copy and also have access to, is foreign.



But the digital revolution has got to make the job of being a distiller of culture that much more daunting, right?

JP: I don't see it as a distiller *per se*—a portal of sorts, I guess. The only thing I see being more difficult is the sheer volume. I mean, there's just so much music, but I don't see that as being an inherently bad thing. I react to the music—like or dislike—the same as I always have.

Peter, are you signing unsigned artists as well as those who are established on labels?

PR: We are doing both. [We're doing] a lot of things that make sense given how fluid and dynamic the web is and how mercurial web-based businesses can be—and sort of *have* to be today. We sign artists directly and we don't do long-term album deals. We really just sign them specifically to a set number of songs, whether it's an EP or album or even a single. I've worked with White Denim and Jacques Renault to do original music that's released only at RCRD LBL. And then we have a network of about 15 different independent labels that have a presence on the site and can put out music—whether it's exclusive or non-exclusive or promotional—on the site and can get adshare revenue with that. The idea is really just to put out as much great music as we can every day. And we have a team of bloggers/A&R people that are helping us find bands.

Why have music blogs struggled so long to legitimize themselves as actual businesses?

PR: I think that most music bloggers aren't struggling or aspiring to be legitimate businesses. It's just people doing it as a hobby because they're really passionate about the music and want to share it with people. I thought that the biggest hurdle to music blogs to date is that taking other peoples' music and posting it without permission is illegal. There's been a wink-wink-nudge-nudge sort of thing where most copyright owners look the other way because there are promotional benefits. Not to say that there isn't a benefit but I think it's hard to build a business when it's predicated on something that's a little unstable. So far the response [to RCRD LBL] has been pretty great—artists are happy to put their music out there for free and get paid for it. Audiences or music fans are happy to get music for free... in a guilt-free context. And for the advertisers obviously it's a way to be a part of something.

Jonathan, what's your view on distributing music when it's assisted by advertising?

JP: I think it is a worthy model. The thing that would give me pause—and when I say this, there are a hundred things that give me pause about the model that I work with right now, [so this] is not to condemn the model—is that when the economy takes a plunge as a whole, those of us who are reliant on advertising dollars will be directly hit... What you're gonna find in the long run is more and more people participating and relying [on] or feeling comfortable with the new models so they become established models. That just takes time though. And there really just hasn't been enough time yet for the new community to establish itself.

Peter, many of the concerns that Jonathan has had as a record label owner and operator for so many years don't apply to RCRD LBL's model. For instance, do you desire to have greater involvement with artists in terms of trying to market songs to radio?

PR: We definitely have thought about that and I'm not sure if we'll ever end up [having] a really long-term relationship with an artist that will last longer than an album or two albums. As Jonathan knows, having a full-blown marketing team to get stuff played on the radio costs a lot of money. And the economics of the internet are pretty brutal. We're not just competing with every other source of music on the internet—we're competing with anything that competes for peoples' attention online. We have to keep our cost structure very lean, and so far we've done a pretty good job of that. Not having to worry about pressing up CDs and getting them sent out to distributors obviously takes out a huge cost for us but, as Jonathan noted, we are also susceptible to a downturn in the advertising market. I'm hopeful that we'll reach a point where we can start to stretch our legs a little bit more and do some of the more traditional label things. I think that most of the artists that we work with don't really need or care about getting on the radio except for maybe a handful of independent radio stations here and there, and we actually have a good relationship with KCRW and have gotten a lot of our bands played on shows there. If you think about how few songs get put on rotation at mainstream Top 40 Clear Channel stations, it's like you win the lottery and become Rihanna. But for everyone else, it's a waste of time.

subpop.com, rcrdlbl.com

“WHAT MAKES A LABEL GREAT IS THE SENSE THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE DOING IT THAT ACTUALLY ARE OUT THERE FINDING MUSIC THAT THEY LOVE.”

-PETER ROJAS



WORDS CAMERON MACDONALD. PHOTOS ANDY EISBERG



SAMPLE FANATIC **STEINSKI** ON
REEL-TO-REEL TAPE, 1960S RADIO, AND
HOW HE BECAME AN UNLIKELY HIP-HOP PIONEER.





In 1983, at the urging of a colleague, Steve “Steinski” Stein and his friend, Douglas “Double Dee” DiFranco, entered a Tommy Boy-sponsored contest to remix G.L.O.B.E. and Whiz Kid’s “Play that Beat Mr. DJ.”

Their prize-winning entry, *Lesson 1 - The Payoff Mix*, turned hip-hop into a funhouse, shoving samples from two-dozen records—including tracks by Boy George, Little Richard, and cha-cha dance instructionals—into exactly five minutes. This radical reconstruction presaged turntablism, modern mixtapes, and acts like Girl Talk, and it’s now considered a masterpiece, having been sampled, scratched up, and bootlegged for the last 25 years.

Steinski and Double Dee didn’t stop there. Their subsequent *Lesson 2* and *Lesson 3* sound collages went further into the funk, supplying breaks used by a battalion of DJ/producers, including Prince Paul, Cut Chemist, and DJ Shadow. In the times since, Stein has done mixes for Ninja Tune and a track for Stones Throw, and dabbled in sound-collage-as-social-commentary with sonic think pieces on the JFK assassination and 9/11.

Stein—now 57 and based in the New York suburbs—is a member of AARP, but he’s hardly retiring; he continues to DJ, produce, lecture, and blog at a steady pace. On the 25th anniversary of *The Payoff Mix*, plunderphonic label Illegal Art has issued *What Does It All Mean?*, a retrospective of Steinski’s best work, so we thought the time was ripe for a ring from *XLR8R*.

***XLR8R*: We hear one of your first gigs was at a food co-op in Brooklyn. Tell us, what did Steinski play back in the day?**

Steinski: I played a lot of old funk—the co-op was basically a bunch of old hippies, so that went over very large. [There were] a lot of different kinds of people, so I could play African music, a little bit of Brazilian music, salsa, Nuyorican stuff and it was a gas. This would’ve been 1981 or 1982, and you could still free-form DJ and cover a whole lot of stuff. I could play rock that would now be considered very campy or corny, but back then it was like, “Oh yeah, this great old Elvis Presley song!” [The party was] on the floor of the grocery store with the stuff pushed back and I used to DJ on top of the dairy case. It was the first time I DJed in public.

When you and Double Dee were putting together *The Payoff Mix*, what was the first idea that came to mind?

We [decided] were going to open it [with a] countdown. You’d think, “My goodness, how old is a countdown nowadays?” but back then, no one had done it. We did the obvious stuff before most people [laughs], so we were hitting the low-hanging fruit very easily. It was all totally improvised. It wasn’t like we had a plan.

What gear did you use?

Douglas was using a state-of-the-art commercial production studio. He had a Studer eight-track machine the size of a refrigerator; it recorded eight tracks on one-inch tape. There were a couple of industrial reel-to-reel decks, and a turntable and a board. This was stuff that he worked with all the time and knew intimately. He killed it with this stuff.

What made your early mixes, like *The Payoff* and the *Lessons* series, stand apart from other hip-hop mixes at the time?

There are a couple of things. [There was] the fact that we were old white guys with different sensibilities in terms of the music we knew. Shit, man, we had show tunes in some of those things. Most people were not up on show tunes and that was stuff I had been listening to since I was old enough to go to the library and take out records. [And there was] Douglas’ expertise in the studio... If you’re not using pause buttons going to a cassette-to-cassette or a reel-to-reel deck at home with two tracks, then you have a lot more liberty. People can now do things on their home computers that are astonishing for a homemade mix. But back then Douglas was like the nuclear weapon of mixing. It was great. The two of us were going to The Roxy a lot—we were up on what was going on. We weren’t being condescending and saying, “Oh yes, we can make a record for the colorful natives.” We *were* the colorful natives.

Speaking of mixes, I listened to your Ninja Tune 10th anniversary mix last night and it’s amazing how many records you sampled...

I think there were 37 [Ninja Tune] records in 60 seconds.

And everything clicks and nothing clashes.

The pre-production for that was really the key. It was just sitting and listening to all the songs and literally making notes like,

"ALL OF A SUDDEN, I FELT THERE WAS LEGITIMACY TO WHAT I WAS DOING."

"This part of the song with this part." I was using Pro Tools by then, thank God. It was the case of recording them all, cutting out pieces, fitting them like a jigsaw puzzle, and then finding out, "Oh yeah, it sounds great except that it's 90 seconds long." That was where advertising discipline seriously worked. In advertising, 60 seconds is 60 seconds. You have to just refit... until you get it to work. That's one of the larger advertising techniques: to be able to edit in a heartless but effective way.

You also like to sneak in surprises.

A lot of my feeling about what makes a good audio stream came from listening to Top 40 radio in the 1960s when I was growing up. A song would be ending and the DJ would come in and there would be sound effects and hollering and yelling, and then into the commercial. Out of the commercial would be a bell ringing and a guy hollering some more, and then into the next song. It was a very high-energy thing maintained with spoken word. Since I don't get on the mic during a mix, I look for other material that would work about as effectively—about a third of the time, it's humor.

Many of the tracks on your retrospective have a political message. What is the strength of adding historical and archival sounds to hip-hop rhythms, like you do in the JFK piece?

The rhythm has the jet propulsion. You've got two things engaged: You've got the intellectual side, which is where the lyric would be, and you've got

the hip-hop rhythm that would engage the hips, as it were. It makes for a strong delivery and it's something that I've always really appreciated. The Kennedy thing... was my first record that I didn't do with Douglas. There was a lot of experimentation, and going back and forth in the studio trying to figure out what I was doing. The 9/11 record was treated much more delicately. [The attacks] were much fresher in people's minds. I didn't want it to be... like, "Ooh yeah, we'll take these groovy, crazy samples and make this arty, sad thing out of it." There's almost no rhythm, or it's a very funereal rhythm. I was in Manhattan watching the second plane fly in—it was something that affected me very immediately, so I didn't want anybody to think I was pissing on anything. I wanted it to be reverential.

What's your general outlook on copyright law and sampling?

When I first started out and we were encountering things like, "This record will never be legal because there's no way that all of the samples can be cleared and negotiated," we started becoming like outlaws a little bit. [For] nice, middle-class boys who had never done anything really wrong in their lives, it was a little romantic.


A couple years ago, I stumbled over one of [Creative Commons founder] Lawrence Lessig's books, and since then I've read several of them. He wrote about what copyright is actually for. He pointed out that this is not a natural law—it is a dispensation granted by the people through the

government for creative types. I learned about the history of copyright, the purpose of copyright, what has been done with copyrighting, intellectual property, and trademarking things... and how it might be used in different ways in society. [It was] a revelation. All of a sudden, I felt there was legitimacy to what I was doing.

In the liner notes of your retrospective, you speak about the future of digital sampling and how we're at "the tip of the iceberg." What's the iceberg?

I'm not absolutely sure. I'm sure that some 15-year-old kid in a bedroom in the Czech Republic is going to come up with something that is going to blow everyone away. Or it's going to be some kid with a laptop on an island in the middle of the Pacific who has been listening to shortwave radio and the internet. I guess that I'm always hoping that somebody is going to come around the bend that absolutely blows everybody out of the tub. I enjoy the feeling that there really are infinite possibilities and you can't predict what's going to happen. That's a real comfort to me.

What Does It All Mean? 1983-2006 Retrospective is out now on Illegal Art. steinski.com

 Read the full transcript of this interview at XLR8R.com/119extras.

XLR8R TV



New episodes every Tuesday.

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THESE ARE THE BREAKS A FEW DRUM CUTS THAT STEINSKI REALLY DIGS.

DYKE & THE BLAZERS

"LET A WOMAN BE A WOMAN, LET A MAN BE A MAN"

For a long while, I felt the break on this was the funkier part of the funkier song ever. Sometimes I still think that. When I discovered the longer, unedited version of this break on the original recording, I thought I'd gone to heaven.

PARLIAMENT

"GOOD OLD MUSIC"

Crisp, clean, and banging. I made a five-minute loop of this on cassette many years ago, and listened to it obsessively. I began to hear things in that break I've never heard again. I can still listen to it play over and over for an incredibly long time, which I imagine says something about my personality, although I'm not sure what.

DOM UM ROMAO

"BROWN, BLACK, BLUE"

One of the first *huge* drum songs I heard back in the '70s, when I was listening mostly to jazz. It's got a samba *bateria* going off to the max. When I started digging for drum breaks in the '80s, this break is what propelled me into the Brazilian music sections of the NYC record stores.

THE EVERYDAY PEOPLE

"I LIKE WHAT I LIKE"

A Canadian funk group who had a club hit in Philadelphia with this in the mid-'70s. Great, hard-driving instrumental on the a-side of the 7", lukewarm vocals on the b-side. Danny Krivit did a nice edit of this at some point.



SECRET NEW ORLEANS

BRASS BREAK

There's a 16-bar drum break I play out that's edited down from an old-school New Orleans brass band. It's got a great second-line rhythm that fits perfectly under a number of other records (gospel, chanting), and also works wonderfully by itself. I'd kick myself if I didn't mention it because it's so great, but I'll be damned if I'm going to tell anyone what it is.

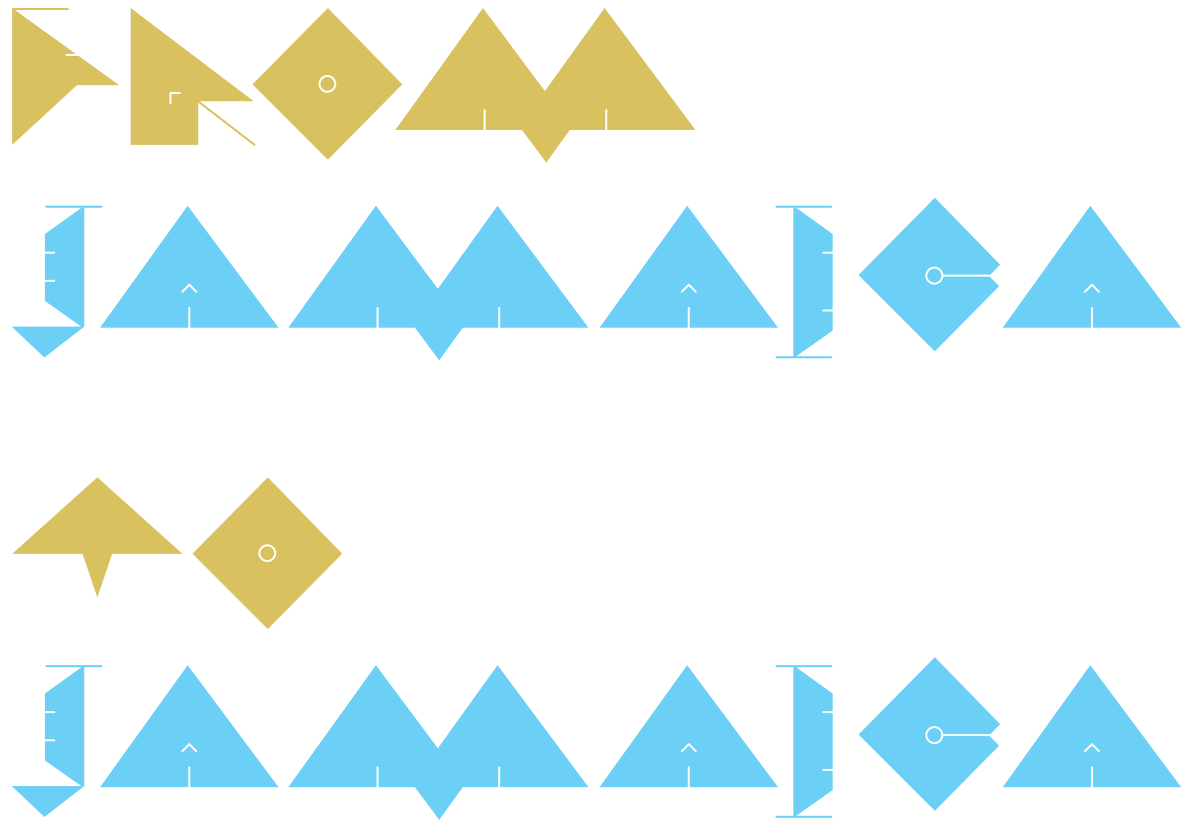
Episode 60
flying lotus'
high score

Episode 61
spun out
with heidi

Episode 62
M83's
Teen Romance



AN INTERVIEW
WITH **MISS PAT**,
MATRIARCH OF **VP RECORDS**,
REGGAE AND DANCEHALL DYNASTY.



Three generations of the Chin family are now represented at VP Records, the New York City-based reggae powerhouse founded by Patricia Chin and her late husband Vincent (a.k.a. “Randy”) in 1979. While her sons Christopher and Randy took over most operations from their parents some years ago, Ms. Chin—known affectionately by VP staff and artists as Miss Pat—is still a daily, grandmotherly presence at the company’s headquarters, overseeing aspects like the Riddim Driven clothing line.

2008 marks Chin’s 50th year in the record industry. It’s also been three decades since she and Vincent left Jamaica, West Indies (where they had run Kingston record shop Randy’s and the famed Studio 17) for the similarly named (but less tumultuous) Jamaica, Queens. In that time, VP has grown from a distributor and record store to an artist-friendly label responsible for launching Sean Paul, Beenie Man, and Mavado onto the world stage. And now, with its acquisition of Greensleeves Records (formerly VP’s largest competitor), the label that touts itself as “miles ahead in reggae music” may actually be the only game in town when it comes to giving reggae, dancehall, and soca artists a worldwide platform. *XLR8R* recently visited Miss Pat at VP headquarters for a discussion about her family, reggae’s place in the new digital marketplace, and whether the label’s new monopoly-like dominance is a good thing.

***XLR8R*: How many people from the family are now involved in VP?**

Patricia Chin: My three kids are involved, which is my two sons and my daughter [Angela Chung] and also my stepson [Clive Chin], and maybe about five grandkids. My sister had a branch in Florida but she’s closed it about a year now.

Clive’s career as a producer predates VP, but how did everyone else find his or her niche within the company?

Joel, Clive’s son, is on the production side, and my daughter does retail and distribution [in Florida]. My granddaughter Stephanie is helping me with Riddim Driven, our clothing line. The rest are just seeing what they like best. My 15-year-old grandson is into fashion, and he’s the

one I bounce things off of regarding clothes. He knows all about what’s going on, what colors people are wearing. Sometimes he comes in to [VP’s retail store in Queens] on the weekend and arranges the clothing displays for me.

I see a lot of vinyl downstairs. Reggae has been slower to embrace the digital revolution than other genres, but it finally seems to be happening. How is that changing the way you do things?

It’s definitely changing things at [a] rapid speed but the core still doesn’t like CDs. Digital is good because you can input a lot of music—it’s easier to carry to the dances. But the real people who love it from their hearts still go [with] vinyl. It’s the image. It’s more exciting when the DJ comes in with a big box of records. The glamour of having a DJ is being lost because of digital. Like everything else, it will come back eventually.

You’ve certainly seen a drop in sales, though...

Yes, because the young people are more into downloading. It definitely has dropped.

How do your sales break down, percentage-wise?

I’d say 70% of sales are still on CDs. LP sales are maybe 7-10%, and digital is really going up. It’s 10-15% now but it’s rising.

As a distributor, VP has historically sold a lot of 45s. Do you see 45s being phased out entirely?

I think it’s going to come around. I can see LPs [coming back]. Little by little, people are trying to catch back the ones they didn’t have. It’s the nostalgia of having the product in their hand... People want to go back 50 years to see how

the cover looked, what people were wearing. That’s why we’re bringing back older titles now. It won’t sell as much as it did before but people who are reggae lovers who maybe were not born then want to see what they missed.

Tell me about the idea behind your new archival label, 17 North Parade.

Back home in Jamaica, there was a lot of recordings my husband did with Clive and my brother-in-law, Keith Chin. They used to run the studios and there was so many records made. At that time, maybe you only focused on one record, but there were 20 or 50 songs made at the same time. Even with Bob Marley, you see new records coming out because at the time they weren’t rated, but people are going backward to see what we missed. A lot of old, re-released stuff is going to come out [through 17 North Parade]. And we’ve acquired a lot of catalog from other producers and labels, like Joe Gibbs, Channel One, Penthouse, Jammys.

It’s been suggested that your acquisition of Greensleeves isn’t a good thing for reggae/dancehall—all the music shouldn’t come from one place. Will Greensleeves still be an independent label even though you own it?

We’ve taken the best employees from Greensleeves and given them reign to do what they do. So they’re separate but not separate. Some people might say [it’s] negative but a lot of people have said they are happy we’re keeping the label alive. We were competitors but they contributed a lot to reggae. We respect what they represent.





Will Greensleeves still be an independent label with its own artists or will it be strictly a catalog label under VP?

I think it will eventually be folded into one [label, with VP]. For now, we have to keep it as it is. I'm going to make my son Randy answer that question [calls Randy in from a nearby room].

Randy Chin: It will still be a standalone label. Greensleeves is also a publishing company—that's the biggest part—and that will stay the same. There's some merging of the two companies going on, but it's more on the back-end side and marketing, not the A&R side. It has a very distinct history and feel, so we want it to stay separate. **If you now own Greensleeves, aren't you in effect signing the artists they sign?**

RC: The ownership is common but it's a separate corporate entity. The contracts [artists have] are with Greensleeves, not VP. There are artists that are sort of legacy with them and that will continue. Busy Signal had a previous album with them and he'll put his new album out through Greensleeves.

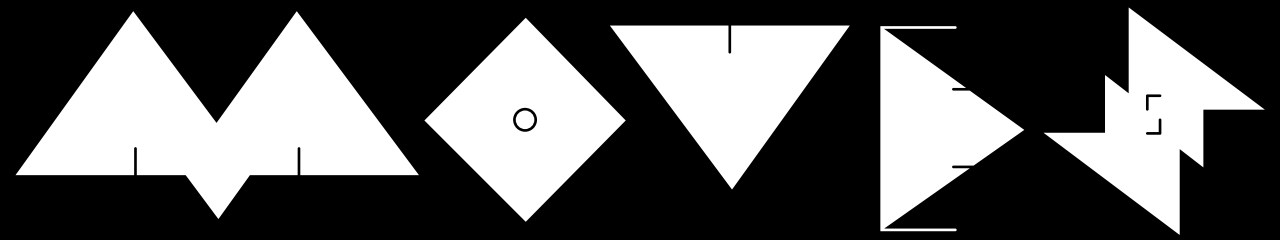
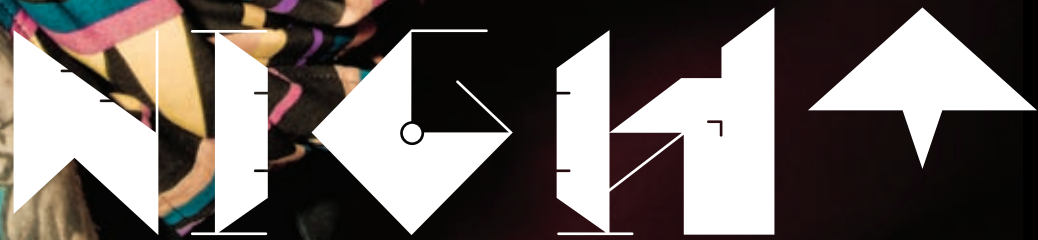
Miss Pat, recently VP has signed mainly roots reggae artists like Etana and Jamelody as opposed to new dancehall artists, which is what you've been most successful at historically. Why is that?

Deejays are usually successful for a very short span. But [roots artists] have fans that really support them. Dancehall is bought by a younger crowd and, as they get older, they shift to roots or

lovers rock. Sean Paul is an exception. He appeals not only to the younger crowd but the middle-aged group too, so he will last longer. The same people buying Sean Paul and Mavado today will go to the roots music when they become older.

vprerecords.com





Photographer:

Adam Schneider

Stylist:

I the I

Styling assistant:

Vivian Host

Models:

Amanda, Jovan, Lesley, Patrick,
Nikki Sneakers, Rich, and Alberto,
Ernesto, & Peach from Todosantos.

Shot on location at Trouble & Bass
at Club Love, 179 Macdougall St. at 8th St.,
New York City.

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(Previous Spread)

PAT!!

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Hellz Bellz

PANTS

Tripp for

Trash & Vaudeville

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SHOES

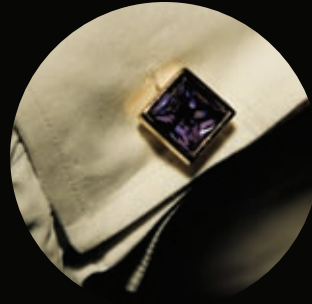
Adidas

WATCH

Casio

GLASSES

Model's own





ALBUM REVIEWS

8/08



HEARTTHROB

Dear Painter, Paint Me

Minus/GER/CD

KENNY LARKIN

Keys, Strings, Tambourines

Planet E/US/CD

JOHN TEJADA

Where

Palette/US/CD



KENNY LARKIN PHOTO BY JESSICA MILLER



WEST COAST AND
BERLIN MAXIMAL
VIBES PERMEATE
TECHNO'S CLASS OF
2008,

As dance music sees an almost total conversion to digital (and laptops quickly replace turntables as the weapon of choice for festival headliners and bedroom Beatport junkies alike), it only makes sense that we find ourselves in the midst of some kind of techno renaissance. Electronic music's most venerable genre has also always been its most digitized, making techno a fitting soundtrack for today's cut-and-paste culture—and as three recent and decidedly non-minimal releases prove, it's capable of as much diversity as the recent nu-electro and synth-rock explosions.

At the head of next-wave techno's freshman class is Jesse Siminski (a.k.a. Heartthrob), a Michigan-born, Berlin-based protégé of Richie Hawtin's who first turned heads and snapped necks with the 2006 floor-filler "Baby Kate." Nothing on Siminski's debut artist album, *Dear Painter, Paint Me*, quite matches that track's infectious groove, but the title track goes a long way towards establishing a trademark Siminski sound: dark, menacing, and massive, marrying the precision of minimalism to the gigantic kick drums and long builds of big-room house. Tracks like "Signs" and the extra-chunky "Slow Dance" would sound equally at home on the laptops of techno purists and electro-house trend-chasers alike. It's the nerviest debut album by a techno artist since The Field's *From Here We Go Sublime*—less brazenly experimental and more crowd-pleasing, but no less of a brilliant variation on the genre's age-old sound.

That sound gets a very different variation on the latest album from Kenny Larkin, on Carl Craig's Planet E Communications. A Detroit native, Larkin relocated to Los Angeles a few years back to pursue a career as (no joke) a stand-up comic, and judging from his latest effort, most of

his creative energy is still focused on delivering punchlines. *Keys, Strings, Tambourines* is a dated, stodgy album, full of St. Germain-style jazz-house and one laughably bad preach-it track, "You Are... (Light)," which was apparently inspired by self-actualization phenomenon *The Secret*. There's something stereotypically "L.A." about the way Larkin strives so hard to show that he's being meaningful and soulful and ends up coming across as corny and shallow. Call it easy-listening techno—assuming you find meandering vibraphone solos easy to listen to.

Ironically, the season's best new techno release also comes from the City of Angels. Even with hit tracks like "Sweat (on the Walls)," John Tejada remains one of the genre's most underrated producers, maybe because much of his output, like 2006's *Cleaning Sounds Is a Filthy Business*, is better-suited to headphones than to the dancefloor, or maybe because L.A. is far removed from the techno epicenters of Detroit and Berlin. Whatever the reasons, no one should sleep on Tejada's latest, *Where*, which finds his dense, sculpted productions as on-point as ever and married to some of the nastiest grooves he's ever turned out. "Torque" rides a wobbly bass into hands-in-the-air territory, while the album's lone vocal track, "Desire," shoots laser-like pulses of synths through Nicolette's smoky voice. Even the most overtly melodic old-school tracks, "Raindrops" and "Turning Pt.," mine new sounds and structures, finding fresh ideas in techno's classic forms. As a new generation of younger producers like Heartthrob revitalizes the genre, it's great to have master craftsmen like Tejada around who are still at the top of their game, and proving that techno will always have more to offer than minimal beats. *Andy Hermann*

CSS

Donkey

Sub Pop/US/CD

These days, it isn't the radio that produces one-hit wonders—it's Apple commercials. Hence the success last year of CSS' "Music Is My Hot Hot Sex" after the tune appeared in an iPhone commercial. Apple couldn't have found a better jingle for its latest gadget than CSS' giddy New Wave amateurism. On *Donkey*, the Brazilian quintet ditches its quirky electro-rock for full-throated post-punk—trading in their Tom Tom Club 12-inches for Sonic Youth albums ("Give Up" even quotes directly from the latter's "Washing Machine"). Unfortunately, vocalist Lovefoxxx still has the same teenage concerns (alcohol, sex, dancing) and delivers the same cutesy overtones, while the polished guitars and brash synths ache for something more substantial. Only on "Left Behind"—which finds Lovefoxxx showing a rare touch of vulnerability—and the hip-shaking "Move" does CSS resolve the contradiction. Otherwise, *Donkey* sounds like a child trapped in Kim Gordon's body.

John S.W. MacDonald



RATATAT

LP3

XL/US/CD

This New York duo's third studio album presents a stripped-down, refocused version of the Ratatat. Shedding their reliance on novelty samples to create the hooks in their songs, as well as the rollicking, boozzy beats showcased on their two volumes of bootleg hip-hop remixes, *LP3* relies instead on the basics: guitars, keyboards, and beats. Recorded at an old house in the Catskills packed with a wealth of old instruments, the album reveals the band's aptitude for anything with a keyboard: Aside from the standard synth lines and Moog melodies, *LP3* incorporates watery organs, tinkling harpsichord, and even the occasional snatch of Wurlitzer. But indie club kids hoping for the next "Wildcat" shouldn't despair just yet—despite all the analog noodling, *LP3* still packs a few classic Ratatat dance gems for the fans. *Connie Hwang*

ADEM

TAKES

Domino/US/CD

Love the '90s? Multi-instrumentalist Adem Ilhan sure does. On his last two solo outings, the Englishman—who also plays in the band Fridge—played rich indie folk on acoustic guitar, dressed with sparkly flourishes from bells and glockenspiel. *Takes* gives a similar, if stripped-down, treatment to 13 covers of pop gems released between '91 and '01. Some numbers, like a mash-up of two Aphex Twin tracks, are spellbinding; others, like versions of Pinback's "Loro" and Smashing Pumpkins' "Starla," pay tribute to the originals. In many spots, Adem's penchant for melancholy and his creamy production make this collection of personal faves feel as precious as any mixtape. Then again, maybe that's the point. *Eric Smillie*

HORACE ANDY

ON TOUR

Trojan/US/CD

Thanks to Massive Attack, Horace Andy has enjoyed a longer career than most roots reggae artists of his vintage. It hasn't hurt that his reedy voice has weathered the years with little, if any, fall-off—which can be attributed to walking the Rastaman walk, as opposed to just chanting the talk. Andy's trademark stuttering interjections are peppered throughout *On Tour*, his first album of new material in six years. Eschewing JA's current hit riddims for a minimal feel (reminiscent of early '80s dancehall), the production thankfully leaves room for the singer's sinuous vocals to breathe. Though not groundbreaking, tracks like "Back Against the Wall" and "Can't Fool the Youths" suggest Andy hasn't been skylarking all this time. *Eric K. Arnold*

BURNING STAR CORE

CHALLENGER

Hospital Productions/US/CD

Over a dozen years and a deluge of releases, Cincinnati multi-instrumentalist C. Spencer Yeh (who heads Burning Star Core) has zig-zagged across subterranean strata of noise, drone, avant-rock, and minimalist composition, summoning images of violinist Tony Conrad collaborating with Vibracathedral Orchestra. *Challenger* finds Yeh at his most compositionally disciplined. Drones still dominate, but they're sculpted with a rigor and melodic nuance that recalls Stars of the Lid and William Basinski. For Yeh, refinement doesn't equal staidness, rather it accentuates his considerable compositional gifts. Additionally, Yeh's keen ear for odd sound sources (warped mouth harp, uninflected uhs, cheetah growls, face slaps) lends surprising textural chiaroscuro and piquant Dada flavor to his eloquent drone poems. *Dave Segal*

DAEDELUS

LOVE TO MAKE MUSIC TO

Ninja Tune/UK/CD

Daedelus, the postmodern Victorian gentleman, returns with more sonic splendor alongside a fresh entourage of cohorts. The curtains open to the snappy up-beats of "Fair Weather Friends" before the retro-mantic "Make It So," featuring Michael Johnson, begins the eclectic-coaster ride of delight. N'fa (1200 Techniques) spits into the dark, sizzling "Twist the Kids" while Paperboy's beat-locked lyrics navigate the filtered boomfest of "Touchtone." Om'Mas Keith, Erika Rose, and Taz make their own contributions. The collaborative content is balanced by Daedelus' kaleidoscopically edited



instrumental tracks, ranging from warped techno fantasies ("I Took Two") to acid-dipped showtunes like "Drummary Jam," finishing with the disco extravagance of "If We Should," recorded with his wife Laura Darling. Never a dull moment.

Doug Morton

DEEPCORD

VANTAGE ISLE SESSIONS

Echospace/US/CD

For those that missed the fleeting vinyl release in 2007, Rod Modell's *Vantage Isle* resurfaces on Echospace as a full CD with extra trimmings. Co-piloted by Steven Hitchell (Soultek), *Sessions* stacks up 13 versions of the title cut in classic Deepcord form, taking the Basic Channel/Maurizio design of dub-techno into new streams of the subconscious. Like parallel universes layered one upon the next, each expression explores the core matter from a unique angle, from deeply minimal static and rhythm interactivity to the push-pull of swirling ambient tides. The central 4/4 pulse is a common thread—at times earth-shakingly dominant and at others barely discernible, like distant signal strobes through the mist. *Doug Morton*

FLYING LOTUS

LOS ANGELES

Warp/UK/CD

One sign of a great beatsmith is when his compositions inspire you to forget about any daily stress and just get lifted away. Such is the case with Flying Lotus and his absorbing sophomore LP (and first for Warp), *Los Angeles*. There's little doubt that trendy clothing chains will be using this stellar album for background music, but these instrumentals represent true forward-thinking headphone hip-hop with the off-kilter yet sturdy drums, a wide range of collaged cosmic samples, and just enough silky vocal contributions. Flying Lotus is best here at creating celestial sounds ("Beginners Falafel," "Golden Diva") though when he opts to crank up the bpm's up and get glitchy ("GNG BNG") he doesn't disappoint. *Max Herman*

GAS

NAH UND FERN

Kompakt/GER/4CD

A decade ago, Wolfgang Voigt's Gas project was the be-all end-all of ambient techno. With the German forest-his old LSD playground and an icon of his country's folklore—as his muse, he converted samples of arcane, orchestral melodies into some of the most mesmerizing loops ever heard. *Nah Und Fern* collects all four Gas albums, threading together the records' fluid drones and skeletal, drifting beats. But certain moods mark each album: Where the eponymous debut and *Pop* are

full of day-lit optimism and spiritual awe, *Zauberberg* and *Konigsforst* are haunted with dread and moonless atmospheres. *Cameron Macdonald*

HOUSEMEISTER

Who Is That Noise

Allyoucanbeat/GER/CD

Can a techno album sound like a puppy? Because Housemeister's *Who Is That Noise* is just that playful. Housemeister packs this album with plenty of buzzing synths and weirdly processed vocals ("What You Want") and cheery bleeps (on the Kylie Minogue-ish "Hallo Liebingsmench"). Most impressive, though, is that Housemeister has mostly done all this without being insufferably twee. The album does sacrifice depth to stay constantly kinetic, which can be exhilarating ("HiFi Positiv") or irritating ("Gorilla Marketing"), depending on your mood. And if the record as a whole never feels particularly ambitious, it stays consistently fun. *Luciana Lopez*

JACKSON CONTI

SUJINHO

Mochilla/US/CD

Long before meeting Ivan "Mamão" Conti, drummer of the Brazilian trio Azymuth, Madlib was a huge fan. Brought together through the documentary *Brasilintime*, Madlib and Mamão had an instant chemistry based on a mutual respect, and that same energy was injected into their debut album, *Sujinho*. *Sujinho* is comprised of reinterpretations of classic '60s- and '70s-era Brazilian tunes, including a jovial take on George Duke's "Brazilian Sugar." Mamão's brilliant rhythms anchor the album, and Madlib follows the lead, applying a thick layer of colorful and vibrant melodies on the keys. It's a feel-good album front to back, with Mamão and Madlib making a strong declaration for modern jazz. *Corey Bloom*

AKIKO KIYAMA

SEVEN YEARS

District of Corruption/GER/CD

Berlin-and-Tokyo-based musician Akiko Kiyama named her debut album after a time when she turned to music—particularly composing—to heal a persistent emptiness. So the intensity of feeling in her carefully constructed minimal structures isn't surprising, but her economy and elegance are. "I Was Weak in the Knees," for example, has a kind of off-kilter dizziness to it, mimicking its title, and the percussion on "Isotope" builds on a child-like, playful pattern. Washes of warmth give "Bite a Plum" a softness that gently contradicts the squelching electronics. Here's hoping the follow-up doesn't take another seven years. *Luciana Lopez*

LEILA

BLOOD LOOMS AND BLOOMS

Warp/UK/CD

It's been a decade since Leila Arab's mystifying and beautiful *Like Weather* popped up on Rephlex, with only one other record (and occasional sightings as a Björk sidekick) giving clues to her whereabouts. Now there's *Blood Looms and Blooms*, as confusing, noisy, and wondrous as its predecessor. "Daisies, Cats and Spacemen" and "Mettle" provide the boundaries: On "Daisies," Leila's sister Roya delicately traces Portishead-ish vocals between Leila's simple plinks, lonely strings, and negative space; on "Mettle," ferocious guitars dive in and out while water drips incessantly. Terry Hall joins Martina Topley-Bird in a haunted, electronic Tin Pan Alley ditty called "Why Should I?" before Leila pops out of our universe again, wonderfully inscrutable. *Rob Geary*

MATMOS

SUPREME BALLOON

Matador/US/CD

If there were any concerns that Drew Daniel's new job as a professor at Johns Hopkins University would inhibit his work with partner M.C. Schmidt in Matmos, *Supreme Balloon* clears the air. The album might be their most sonically pleasing release yet. Flipping the switch on their usual concept-and-sample aesthetic, Matmos has made an album using *only* synths and no samples—we're treated to a fun set of beat-driven, short, abstract-pop songs. The main attraction here is the epic title track: A slow-burning and oscillating psych-Kraut jam that runs nearly a half hour long, "Supreme Balloon" cranks up the synthesized heat and rises off into the distance. *Wyatt Williams*

NOMO

GHOST ROCK

Ubiquity/US/CD

On their self-titled debut, Michigan-based NOMO took Afrobeat in a completely new, gorgeously distorted, and fuzzy direction, but their sophomore stab makes no attempt to serve up more of the same. Few album titles



could live up to the promisingly odd-sounding title *Ghost Rock*, yet 30 seconds into "Brainwave" you understand where it comes from. Yes, there are horns aplenty. Yes, African influence is abundant. ("All the Stars" features a wonderful rhythmic backdrop, perhaps thanks to percussionist Adam Rudolph.) And yes, their sound is still deeply entrenched in funk. Though these guys continue to build on a foundation of polyrhythmic swirls (rare in American jazz and funk), where their structure is climbing to, only the stars know. *Derek Beres*

QWEL & KIP KILLAGAIN

THE NEW WINE

Galapago4/US/CD

On *The New Wine*, Qwel's dense, multi-syllabic rhymes are buried in biblical metaphors that might take repeat listens to grasp. "Even if Adam and Eve had heeded the father and hadn't eaten that apple/ There'd still be self seekin' artists," he raps on "Adam & Eve." This album, the third in a seasonally themed series—following autumn's *The Harvest* (with producer Maker) and winter's *Freezerburner* (with Meaty Ogre)—is produced entirely by Kip Killagain. His grim, apocalyptic soundscapes are filled with thunderous basslines and haunting violins that compliment Qwel's fire-and-brimstone flow. Despite its religious leanings, *The New Wine* isn't "Christian hip-hop"—it's a thought-provoking and scathing criticism of American popular culture. *Zoneil Maharaj*

RADIOACTIVE MAN

GROWL

Control Tower/UK/CD

Stepping out of his demanding role as the other Lone Swordsman, Keith Tenniswood is finally able to release his latest solo effort on his own Control Tower imprint. *Growl* stacks up 11 cuts of machine-driven electro, analog to the core and step-sequenced like nobody's fuckin' business. With the exception of Andrew Weatherall's cameo on "Double Dealings" and Dot Allison's marginally tolerable murmuring on "Nothing at All," the album is built with the kind of box-banging electro Tenniswood is known for. From the nasty, mechanical shuffle of "State of That" to the silken synth amperage of "Dalston to Detroit" and "Up in the Air," Tenniswood shows us what all those knobs and blinking lights can really do in the right hands. *Doug Morton*

STARS LIKE FLEAS

The Ken Burns Effect

Hometapes/US/CD

Documentary master Ken Burns' style is about clarity and distilling history's messy progression into coherent, boxed-set-sized miniseries. Stars Like Fleas' style is organic, untethered, and occasionally gripping (in the way of untouched, unedited personal narratives). Alternately soft and sprawling, *The Ken Burns Effect* finds the eclectic Brooklyn-based band fusing indie quirkiness with free-jazz tension, texture, and release. "Berbers in Tennis Shoes" is a good example of their style—singer Montgomery Knott pines for someone over an intertwined mess of music—multiple sunny melodies, strained vocals, and occasional spazzy bursts of guitar—that mirrors the emotional contradictions of someone in the throes of love. But, like real life, the album can be a bit heavy on drifting, languid moments. *Patrick Sisson*



RANKIN SCROO SOLID

Crucial Youth/US/CD

A longtime presence on Cali's underappreciated reggae scene, Rankin Scroo was introduced to a whole new audience through his work with E-40. That explains why *Solid's* opening number, "Run Come," doesn't just bubble, it slaps. A one-man band, Scroo plays most of the instruments, sings and chats with equal finesse, and produced and mixed the album to boot. His self-determination is as evident as his talent, yet he's not completely on his own: Ginger nices up "Heavenly Father," Jah Dan appears on "My People," and Lutan Fyah shares lead vox on "Dream Dream." With contemporary reggae mired in a formulaic pop-oriented state, *Solid* blazes an original, independent trail through the roots-dancehall wilderness. *Eric K. Arnold*

RZA AS BOBBY DIGITAL DIGI SNACKS

Koch/US/CD

More consistent than *8 Diagrams* and fresher than Ghostface's *The Big Doe Rehab*, *Digi Snacks* is the most impressive Wu-affiliated album of the past year. And it might just be RZA's most consistent solo effort, too. As with previous Bobby Digital affairs, it's not always clear where the character and the real RZA begin and end (though "You Can't Stop Me Now" is pretty much an autobiographical treatise). Musically, however, the Abbot shows that he's still one of hip-hop's most original producers. Striking a seamless balance between sample-based production and organic contributions from John Frusciante, Dhani Harrison, and Stone Mecca, *Digi Snacks* is familiar enough to please Wu loyalists and just weird enough to bug them out. *Jesse Serwer*

STEREOLAB CHEMICAL CHORDS

4AD/UK/CD

Sticking with the accessible pop of *Margarine Eclipse*—which many fans, saw as a rebound from the band's divisive 2001 album, *Sound-Dust*—Stereolab offers its tenth studio album, *Chemical Chords*. Gone (mostly) are the Krautrock underpinnings that characterized their beloved early work—instead, horns, bells, and orchestral flourishes compliment a very upbeat set of sun-drenched lounge-pop. "Nouns Vous Demandons Pardon" and "Vortical Phonoteque" are vintage 'Lab, but tracks like "Pop Molecule" apply a Burt Bacharach sheen to the group's formula. Though often knocked for a long string of samey records, it's worth noting that Stereolab has yet to release a bad album. *Chemical Chords* is no exception. *Joe Colly*

SYCLOPS I'VE GOT MY EYE ON YOU

DFA/US/CD

A riddle wrapped in an enigma, studded by motorik percussion and furred by kinked synths, this furtive project associated with Sheffield-based Maurice Fulton plays out like Claymation characters and silicon cowbells jamming to Herbie Hancock's *Future Shock* with Arthur Baker at the boards. Whether recorded by a press-shy Finnish trio, or actually the work of the notoriously press-shy Fulton (choose which version of the ambiguous story you find most intriguing), this album of arpeggiated electro, boogie-down acid, and brooding 8-bit jazz-funk is both knotty and naughty, featuring Syclops' previous a-sides and additional syncopated analog jams for widescreen beardos and cloistered '70s sequencer weirdoes. *Tony Ware*



THE CINEMATIC ORCHESTRA LIVE AT THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL

Domino/US/CD

Few bands realize the full potential—what would happen with no holds barred—of their music like Jason Swinscoe. He first sketched TCO in 1999, (while promoting artists on Ninja Tune) and assembled a few jazz players who were open to his cinema-inspired ideology. Over the last nine years, his band has morphed and evolved numerous times, one iteration being the 40-piece outfit that performed in front of 4,000 people on this beautiful recording. Reinterpreting songs from previous albums—mostly *Everyday* and *Ma Fleur*—this is the stuff musical dreams are made of. With the keyboard- and saxophone-driven "Child Song" and the haunting, quiet and acoustic "To Build a Home" leading the charge, Swinscoe's cinema is worthy of its world renown. *Derek Beres*

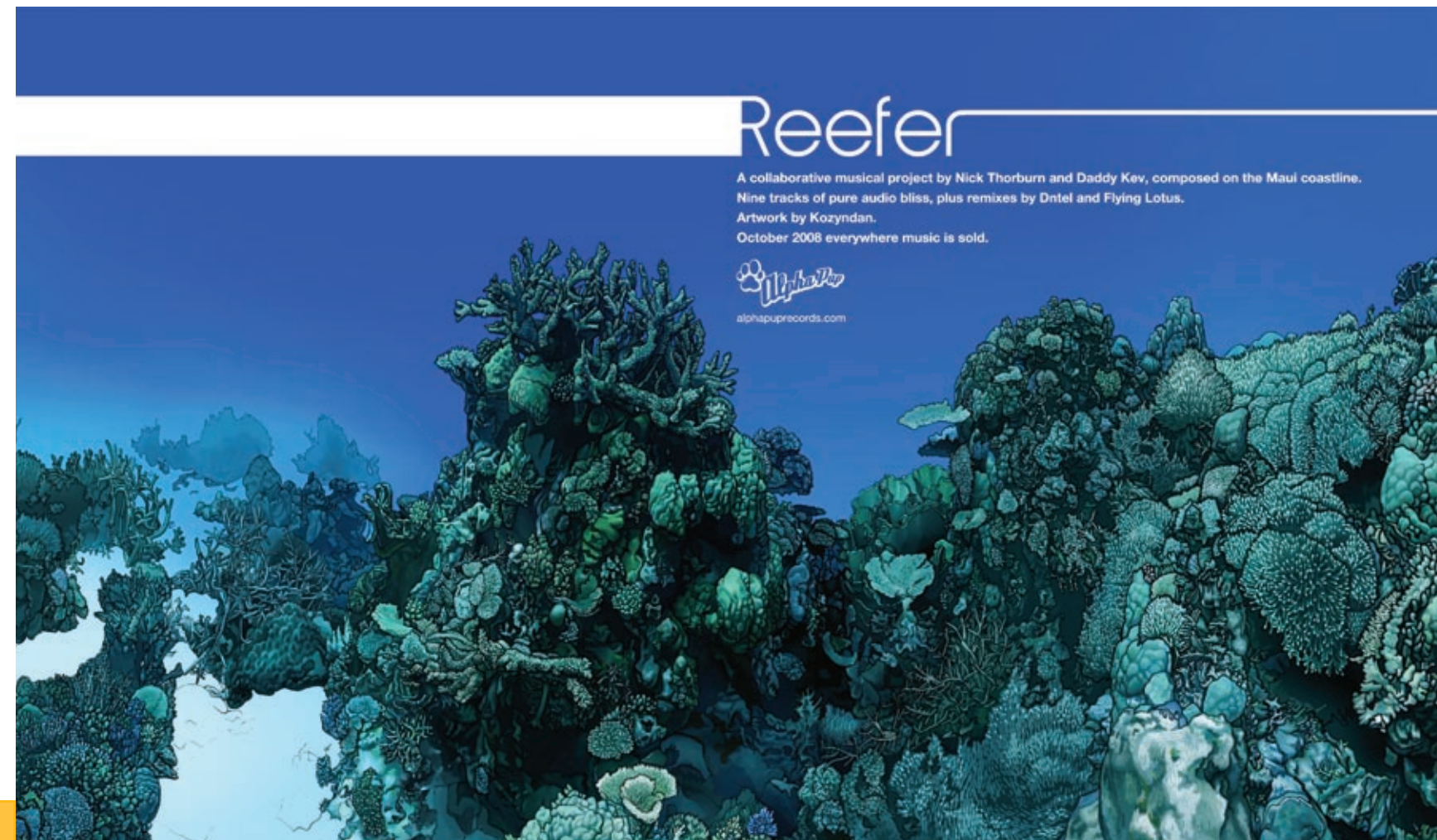
ZERO T CHEAP SHOTS

C.I.A./UK/CD

Once known as Zero Tolerance, Dublin's Cian McCann makes the fiscal year's second major drum & bass statement with *Cheap Shots*. (The first was Commix's *Call to Mind*.) BBC 1xtra DJ Bailey joins McCann on "Robots." In a nice flip of the genre's status quo that aggressively sidesteps on a beautiful dub-, jazz-, and hip-hop-influenced path. With a Timberlake-esque falsetto, Steo lends class to multiple tracks, including the single "Walk Away," while accomplished scene diva Laura Pacheco's "Gota Touch" is full-figured R&B. But it's MC Conrad-whispering "You start to breathe in a beautiful way" on "Morning Sex"—who steals the show. Zero T's vibrant debut is the next logical progression in certifiably gorgeous D&B. *Rachel Shimp*



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TONY ALLEN: LAGOS SHAKE

Honest Jon's/UK/CD

NIGERIA 70: LAGOS JUMP

Strut/UK/CD



TONY ALLEN



A LOOK AT LAGOS,
NIGERIA THEN
AND NOW—FROM
AFROBEAT PIONEERS
TO ITS CURRENT
CROP OF FANS
AND REMIXERS.

I'm driving through the back roads of upstate New York. Secondary roads named for the families that still live near them. Single-lane roads on which you're passed by pickup trucks with gun racks. Roads leading past signs that read, "Jesus loves you—full range of bait and tackle." Passing through one-stop-sign towns like Upper Lisle, NY, I'm blasting Sir Shina Peters & His International Stars from the new installment of Strut Records' *Nigeria 70* compilation series of monstrously heavy, funky Afrobeat.

Realizations come at every turn. First, it's striking that this music older than I am should seem so boldly new: The guitar riffs that loop like today's back-to-basics, roughshod sampling styles; the impossibly tight, electronic snare drum; the "retro" purity of a simple synthesizer. And it's striking that here, in one of the whitest and most rural parts of the Northeastern United States, music made by urban Africans more than 30 years ago should shake with such ferociously contemporary, or perhaps such essentially timeless, fervor. "This is me, Tete Muo Bu Muo," Tony Tete Harbor announces at the beginning of a song, "expressing [his] loneliness." Harbor's band, The Star Heaters of Nigeria, begin a melancholy rhythm and impoverished moan that I'm certain could bear meaning to some upstate pickup-truck pilot, driving past the farm his grandparents once owned, on a road that shares his name, to a job at a cafeteria in Cortland or a Starbucks at Cornell.

But therein lies the magic of Afrobeat. Much like reggae or hip-hop, it's music that has escaped its temporal and cultural bonds to become something bigger than its players and singers, more meaningful even than its own sound and vision. The truth of Afrobeat is spoken in rhythms and contexts, irrespective of linguistic and political boundaries. It's a truth of the rebelliousness of survival against social, cultural, and economic odds,

as sermonized on Eddie Okwedy's collection-ending "Happy Survival." It's a truth similarly expounded upon by *Lagos Shake*, a new collection of contemporary electronic remixes and re-cuts of Tony Allen's modern Afrobeat classic, *Lagos No Shaking*.

Lagos Shake goes to prove that what reggae and dub were to the punk and post-punk generations, Afrobeat might be to the globalized post-electronic funk pandemic. As punk found limitless rebellious potential in reggae's translucent rhythms, the likes of U.K. grime-ists Newham Generals and *baile* funksters Bonde Do Role dig into Allen's rhythm-scapes to conceive a new non-verbal rhetoric of frenzied catharsis. Egyptian jazz master Salah Ragab and Chicago's Hypnotic Brass Ensemble bring a heavy, spacey, Sun Ra vibe to Allen's work, while Carl Craig and Diplo twist and tweak tunes into fader-pushed rhythmic obscenities. The overall effect is one of possibilities and options contains within a rhythmic language that, while once so new and bold, now seems not only familiar, but universally vital—almost circulatory in its relationship to contemporary music's existence.

That Afrobeat would survive past the heyday of its singular driving force, Fela Kuti, was never assured. That it would flourish as never before under the legacy he left—his drummer and co-conspirator Tony Allen, and his children including Femi Kuti—is even more surprising. But with the stream of re-releases like *Nigeria 70: Lagos Jump*, and an ever-expanding global scene of critically lauded new bands (Antibalas, Kokolo, NOMO, Mifune—all just in the Eastern U.S.), what should no longer be surprising is that Afrobeat has become the shibboleth that dub once was; the password to a vast musical underground, be that on the streets of São Paulo or the clubs of London or New York. Long live the Punky Afro Party. *Justin Hopper*



UFFIE

ED REC VOL. 3

Ed Banger/FRA/CD

By the time the domineering *7* came out last spring, Ed Banger's second label comp had gone a ways toward shoving the Parisian electro-house label into the hipster limelight. A year later, *Vol. 3* doesn't redefine anything, really: The players are mostly the same (Busy P, Justice, Uffie, DJ Mehdi) and it's still a whole lot of rock-loving two-ton beats with nods to disco, curtsies to Daft Punk, and love for sneering, Euro-accented club rap. Murs guests on the Busy P cut, dropping groan-worthy names like Cobrasnake and Steve Aoki. Justice's "autoremix" of "Stress" turns the track into one of the best works of anger and grandiosity since the original. But *Vol. 3* is all about DSLs "Find Me in the World," a basic enough hip-hop track with a very nice synth melody stairstepping through the mix. The cut more than makes up for hearing Uffie on AutoTune. *Michael Byrne*

ANDY VOTEL'S BRAZILIKA

Far Out/UK/CD

Andy Votel is among the world's most astute and versatile crate-diggers; he never fails to excavate a cornucopia of unjustly neglected treasures. *Brazilika* cherry-picks 26 songs from the Som Livre and RGE imprints, offering a revelatory highlight reel of equatorial freak rock. Votel rescues from obscurity (save for Os Mutantes and Azymuth) several groups the equal of their more fêted European counterparts. Following in Tropicalia's wake, this sound is more neuron-blown, rhythmically explosive, and fuzz-toned than that movement's figureheads. Artists like Os Brazões, Trio Soneca, and Novos Baianos imbue proggy psych rock and lysergic pop with a phenomenal life force and quicksilver inventiveness that still sounds vital. *Dave Segal*

BUZZIN' FLY: 5 GOLDEN YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS

Buzzin' Fly/UK/CD

What, exactly, is the "wilderness" to which U.K. house label Buzzin' Fly refers in the title of this new anniversary compilation? The wilderness of wild success in a shrinking milieu? No matter. Over two "retrospective" CDs, *Wilderness* proves that Buzzin' Fly has managed to churn out some of the finest club-house (Justin Martin's breezy "Sad Piano") and gastro-pub soundtracks (Jimpster's downtempo masterpiece "Square Up") of the 21st century. The third CD is a look at things to come—essentially Discs One and Two combined into a kind of über-house exemplified by Stimming's Mozart-meets-Villalobos "Kleine Nachtmusik." It's evidence that Buzzin' Fly's mission of pushing dance music will continue to bear fruit for half-decades to come. *Justin Hopper*

DEATH BEFORE DISTEMPER 2: REVENGE OF THE IRON FERRET

DC Recordings/UK/CD

To speak of DC Recordings merely in dancefloor terms is to miss the mark. On the U.K. label's second compilation, paranoid-disco provocateurs Padded Cell and The Emperor Machine step out of the limelight, allowing a fascinating amalgamation of genres to surface from new talent. From the pummeling psych of Boozie's "Insanity Drive" to patient and droney Kraut rhythms of Muscleheads and The Oscillation, the offerings here are consistently gnarled and heavy. The biggest successes come on Bot'ox's "The Crash Theme" and Kelpie's "Shipwreck Glue." These tracks strive for something fervent, affecting, and epic, and when they succeed, they're enthralling. *Ross Holland*



GREG WILSON'S 2020 VISION

2020 Vision/UK/CD

Carrying around a title like "the godfather of electro-funk" is no easy feat. Add to that a return to DJing after a 20-year hiatus and you're risking a serious case of self-parody. But Greg Wilson has proven himself with this mix, and it feels like another victory lap for the Manchester edit master. Culling tracks primarily from the 2020 roster (from Fred Everything, Random Factor, et al.), Wilson rotates through electro, house, disco, and funk with reel-to-reel overdubs and a fine ear for pacing. However, the triumph here equally belongs to 2020 Vision. Tracks like Nick Chacona's ambitious "Through the Door" and Spirit Catcher's gleaming "Sweet Deal" are flooring. 2020 would have been right at home the Hacienda. *Ross Holland*

KON & AMIR: OFF TRACK VOL. 2—QUEENS

BBE/UK/CD

For their fifth official release, *Off Track: Vol. 2*, crate-diggers Kon & Amir give us a double-disc-sized peek into the disco and African grooves in their box. Disc One offers underground disco of the obscure variety with re-edits by Kon, highlighted by Sparkle's "Let It Go" and Eddie Benitez's "We Are the Ones." The second set, Amir's selections, features Afrobeat, soul, and funk-driven numbers like Earl Rodney's triumphant "Midnight Man." Solid selectors, to be sure, Kon and Amir provide a hot night at the disco, but when they get around to Orchestre Black Dragons' "E Sa F'aïye," it leads into an even hotter day at the beach. *David Ma*

ROUND BLACK GHOSTS

scape/GER/CD

Round Black Ghosts is a solid primer for dubstep's post-techno side, as seen through the lens of Berlin label scape. Elemental's "Raw Material" best captures that sound

where irate, acid synth lines run into faint, dubby guitar riffs. Pinch's digital knick-knacks stalk the listener on the eerie "136 Trek," while Pole's dubstep experiment, "Alles Klar," waits ominously just around the corner—however, its hiccuping rhythm tends to go nowhere. Those looking to follow dubstep's bloodline to Berlin digital-dub can dissect 2562's "Channel Two" where the Dutch producer smudges gaseous synth riffs and room-rattling bass across a jittery South London rhythm. Maybe safest to just let dubstep stay in the lab. *Cameron Macdonald*

SOUL MESSAGES FROM DIMONA

Número Group/US/CD

Soul Messengers started out on the South Side of Chicago, taking in the Marcus Garvey-tinged ideas of the Black Hebrew movement while learning to work the dancefloor with their mid-'60s funk tunes. With the specter of the Promised Land looming, the trio toured Liberia before eventually arriving in Dimona, Israel—"the center of the spiritual universe," say the liner notes. *Soul Messages From Dimona*, one of many great reissues from Número Group, collects rare tracks of psychedelic gospel and spiritual soul from Soul Messengers and related groups recorded in Israel. Rarely has the diaspora sounded so smooth, soulful, and funky. A must-hear for anyone with an adventurous ear. *Wyatt Williams*

TRAUM 100

Traum/GER/CD

Riley Reinhold (Triple R) and Jacqueline Klein celebrate their label's 100th vinyl release with a superb compilation of new and exclusive tracks. Traum is the current rendezvous point for the most seductive elements of Detroit techno, classic trance, ambient, and whatever their artists fancy. Equally interested in developing new sounds as banking on established talent (Dominik Eulberg, Fairmont), that diversity shows in 100. Minilogue and Thomas Brinkmann contribute a pair of dancefloor igniters against which newcomers Super Flu and Bukkadior & Fishbeck more than hold their own. Broker/Dealer's stunning new "Midnight" buries tribal drums deep inside bachelor-pad minimal, and Jesse Somfay offers up the best cello part this side of Apparat. Dreamy. *Rachel Shimp*



Broken Business

By Peter Nicholson

FUTURE JAZZ AND BUSTED BEATS



En Tu Casa

By Nick Chacona

HOUSEKEEPING: FROM TECH AND MINIMAL TO DEEP AND TRADITIONAL



When all else fails, turn to jazz. Gas may be \$5 a gallon, kids may still be dying in Iraq, and the same politicians with different faces may be gearing up for a summer of mudslinging, but that swing, that bebop, that hip-hop keeps floating along, taking us away from the dreary nine-to-five grind.

Top of the list for my hall-pass from drudgery would be the *Hot Corner* EP, the latest from Finland's finest, **The Five Corners Quintet**. "Hot Rod" kicks things off with some fried-chicken guitars, easy-going handclaps, and loosey-goosey piano, giving modal jazz a shuffling, entirely different flair. "Shake It" is the stormer, with the tight interplay of **Jukka Eskola** on trumpet and **Timo Lassy** on tenor sax riding rolling rhythms from **Antti Lojtonen** and **Teppo Makynen**. **Tuomas Kallio** of **Nu Spirit Helsinki** fame does all the arrangements and production and he should be especially proud of this one.

A bit rarer than that disc (Attention collectors! Limited edition of 400) is *Funky Instrumentals Vol 2*, courtesy of Mukatsuku. Oddly enough, considering the title, the a-side is **Ken Morimura**'s "Descarga Pa' Ti," which, despite being thoroughly Japanese in origin and execution, begins with jovial Spanish vocals before easing into a chugging Latin dance-jazz jam. The b is a rollicking funk-jazz excursion from yet another Finnish outfit, **The Soulwisters**. "Soulpadding" drops a particularly juicy guitar solo over some frenetic drum work in a late-'60s vein. Freak out, man!

Been a minute since we checked in with our boy **Gerd** and his 4Lux label, who make our big list of Labels We Love, but looks like they've been busy. In addition to a series of albums, they've got a new line of "white label" 12"s. The oh-so-imaginatively titled *Future Music* EP (c'mon, guys, you can do better than that!) comes from **Daru**, a hip-hop producer from Michigan, and **Reggie B.**, a Californian singer. It's slick, it sways to a sloppy beat, and you can definitely bug out to the queasy, sleazy synths. **OlivierDaySoul** also contributes to the white label series and *Soul4U* is a dynamite stick of beats and spacey keys from **Oddisee** backing Olivier's super-funky vocals.

Every now and then (more now than then) I sleep on a bit of hotness that requires a rewind—such is the case with **Monsieur Greg's Broken Bop** EP, a digi-only release that came from Bagpak. "Boost It" layers chopped vocals over crispy bruk beats, slap bass inna pop-locking future-jazz stylee, while the title cut has an almost 4Hero feel, but like if 4Hero decided to chill at a Parisian sidewalk cafe for the afternoon.

Gotta close things out with one of those huge cuts that is perfect for blowing people's minds just before you turn on the lights. The track's called "Jazzrevolver," it comes from Italian producer , and it's on his Noego label. Track it down and be inspired by woody upright bass, thick pads, and a fluttering yet slamming beat punctuated by astronaut-style vocal loops. Extraterrestrial!

Back from a long hiatus, Esho Records has begun releasing new material strictly in digital format. Home to artists such as **Dave Warrin**, **Julius Papp**, and **Lisa Shaw**, Esho developed its own brand of smooth, tech-deepness at the time when the Naked Music sound was all the rage. The first release is a two-track EP from **Cassady**, which continues in traditional Esho fashion. The first cut, "1968," features a Martin Luther King Jr. sample layered over a crossfire of M1 organ, sub-bass, and synth stabs. The second, "Ojo Iwaju," is a bubbling Afro-house number, with lush chords, lively percussion, and uplifting string synths.

Another label that has kept a strictly digital profile for the past year, Deep Haven, has signed a vinyl P&D agreement with **Kevin Hedge's** Blaze Imprints, and will resume releasing 12" singles this summer. First up, Pasadena, California's **Will "Reel Soul" Rodriguez** teams up with vocalist **Damon Montelongo** on "What Am I Supposed to Do," a sultry groove that has all the signature Reel Soul production characteristics, save the airy pan-flute synth, which seems a bit out of place. The second comes from NY's **Alberto Mendez** (a.k.a. **Sterling Ensemble**), and vocalist **Mario Inchausti**. "Truth (I Know You Are Beautiful)" is typical SE fare, with all the Afro percussion, dreamy jazz chords, and uplifting lyrics that Mendez is known for. Remix duties here went to **Man X** and Reel Soul who offer more dancefloor-friendly variations.

Detroit's **Theo Parrish** will be dropping a pair of singles simultaneously on his own Sound Signature imprint. Theo constantly continues to stretch sonic boundaries and the first release, *Going Downstairs Parts I and II*, heads far out toward the void. Loosely

constructed around a chant of the title phrase, each "Part" is a variation on a 4/4 triplet pattern that creates an added circular effect to the already spacey Rhodes and synth lines that dominate the melodic space. The second of the pair is more grounded, and-dare I say—dancefloor-friendly. On the a-side rests "Love Triumphant," one of the most emotionally moving tunes I've heard this summer. The cornerstone of the song is an infinitely repeating woodwind line, slightly reminiscent of a Steve Reich motif. On the flip, "Space Bumps" is an exercise in sparse hypnotic rhythm—something that Theo is known for. Parrish has seemingly become a regular at **François K's** Deep Space night at NYC club Cielo, so if this is your sound, it's quite a treat to hear him on the famed Cielo system.

Speaking of Cielo, Tommy Boy Records has just released the fifth in the Cielo CD compilation series aptly titled *Cinco*. The two-disc set, mixed by resident spinners **Willie Graff** and **Nicolas Matar**, once again showcases the signature sound and vibe of the club with tracks from artists like **Louie Vega**, **Charles Webster**, **Alix Alvarez**, **Filsonik**, and **Justin Martin**.

Glancing left, the consistently innovative Tiny Sticks label run by **Duncan Stump** is set to release **Telespazio's** "Telemetric." Once again **Fabrizio Mammarella** takes his disco-forward production approach to the original mix of spacious, bubbling grooves. And though the original is worth its weight in gold, it's really the **Arto Mwanbe** rework that takes this release deep into classic house territory. Scoop it.



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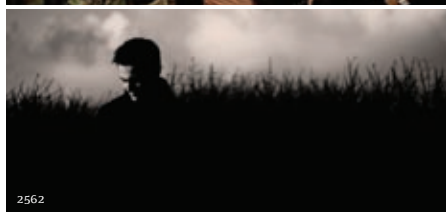
Basic Needs

By Kid Kameleon

LOW-END NECESSITIES, FROM RAGGA TO DUBSTEP AND BEYOND



SUBOSC PHOTO BY MATTHEW TRENTACOSTE



2562



DJ C

The bass sound is morphing at a mile a minute, and I'm fully onboard with the new strain of tumbling, out-of-control hip-hop/electro beats and Voltron-sized synth basslines that *New Yorker* music critic Sasha Frere-Jones has dubbed "Lazer Bass" (although I prefer Lazer Sword's term "Future Blap"). Several big releases didn't wrap up in time for this installment of Basic Needs, but there are two artists on the scene that you shouldn't miss.

The first is a regular who is on his way to becoming my favorite producer of 2008. One of the leaders of the Glasgow sound, **Rustie** is *thee* remixer in demand at the moment, thanks to his truly disorienting layers of synth and beats. Check the click-clack of his remix of "Darma," the new single by **FOOL** on Hum+Haw. FOOL is a collaborative project between **Alex Smoke** and **Shadowhuntz's MC Non**, and Rustie's mix sits well next to **Chris De Luca v Phon.o's** and **Name+Relucto's**.

Rustie takes a more abstract angle on his remix for Australian avant-rock group **Pivot**, building "In the Blood" to crazed heights by fusing live drums with Soviet-era synths-gone-wild. That whole EP, with a great remix from **Clark** as well, is available on Warp, and Rustie seems to get a new track up every week on his MySpace page, so check him out often at myspace.com/rustiebeetz.

The second Lazer Basser to check is London's **Zomby**, who killed it in 2006 with his track "Spliff Dub" and who takes a slightly more dark and driving, dance-oriented approach to the sound. His latest is "Liquid Dancehall" b/w "Strange Fruit" on Ramp Recordings, a dark ride that twists up grime beats with synths and dubbed-out effects. Zomby should have a lot more coming, so keep your eyes on myspace.com/zombyproductions.

Jumping into the dancehall side of

things, be sure to check forthcoming material from Vancouver's SUB OSC label, which blasts listeners with a fusion of future dancehall, dubstep, and glitched-out hip-hop. The first two releases will be ready by early fall, and include production from **Max Ulis**, **Self-Evident**, and **Taal Mala** with original vocals from **Warrior Queen**, **Rider Shafique**, and **Ras Oney**. Self-Evident's crazy cut-up vocal work and Taal Mala's genius synth sounds shine especially bright. Future releases from those three as well as **Phowa**, **Meesha**, and **Calamalka** are forthcoming, as is some wicked white-label business. They're breathing life into dubstep inna drunk-robot style at myspace.com/suboscclubs.

There are several bass-oriented albums to look out for as well, all with related singles and remixes. The Netherlands' **2562** has released *Ariel* on Tectonic, an awesome and seamless mix of techno and dubstep that skips back and forth between complex half-time rhythms and propulsive uptempo jams. It recalls classic Tempa records but gives the sound a new twist. The "Techno Dread" b/w "Enforcers" 12" is a great place to start. Also, **DJ C** and **Zulu's Gods and Robots** self-released album is available at Mashit.com. It's a deadly combination of C's loping party beats and Zulu's fierce flows. Find many of the duo's favorite singles on it, too, including "Darling," "Animal Attraction," "Ransom the Senator," and "Body Work," as well as remixes from **Ghislain Poirier** and **Murderbot**.

Lastly, **Adrian Michna** (a.k.a. **Egg Foo Young**) is releasing his debut album, *Magic Monday*, on Ghostly International this fall. Fans got a taste of his pure but funky minimal electro sound on the *Ghostly Swim* compilation earlier this year, so this release is key for anyone who remembers that the bass sound has always been rooted in electro.



Read the Label

By Jesse "Orosco" Serwer

HIP-HOP MIXTAPES, WHITE LABELS, AND SHIT



88-KEYS



TANYA MORGAN

Try to remember the name **Charles Hamilton**. He doesn't exactly have a memorable moniker but trust, this kid is next-level. A Harlem-based MC/producer newly signed to Interscope, Charlie (or is it Chuck?) has been making noise on the 'net thanks to a memorable freestyle on **DJ Skee's** radio show and his seriously wacked-out, Sonic the Hedgehog-infested MySpace page and website (myspace.com/hamiltonsmusic and iamnotcharleshilton.com, respectively). Homeboy's MySpace game is on-point: He's got something new up there almost daily, each new joint fresher than the next (at press time, the latest upload is "Sun Music," a chipmunk-soul flip of TV on the Radio's "Staring at the Sun"). *Outside Looking In*, Hamilton's **Green Lantern**-assisted debut mixtape, just dropped as I'm writing this but it already feels like a classic.

Best known for his millennial work with Mos Def and Black Star, producer **88-Keys** is set to release his debut LP, *The Death of Adam*, through Decon Records this fall. To get heads ready for his unusual production style (basically, letting the songs he samples play out for 30 to 45 seconds before segueing into the loop), the Kanye crony recently dropped *Adam's Case Files: The Mixtape*. Highlights include the slinky "Deal Breaker" (featuring a "Mr. Bentley," who may or may not be FonZworth) and the groupie-themed "Under 21," starring Detroit new jack **Big Sean**.

It's been a few years since we've heard from **Tanya Morgan** (though the "Brooklynatti" crew turns up on 88-Keys' "Cuddle Bums") so I'm once again compelled to remind you that Tanya is not a woman, but, in fact, three dudes. While their new EP, *The Bridge* (Loud Minority Music), is solid overall, a handful of tracks stand out above the rest, namely the lyrically introspective

"Got 2 Get Done" ("Feel like a lion in a cage/I ain't giving the fans all that I am/Feel like I'm lyin' on the stage/Am I going through a phase?") spits rapper **Illyas**, drastically altering his cadence to approximate different voices, Biggie-style) and the Latin-freestyle-flavored roller jam "How Low."

Is **Crooked I** the best rapper of all-time with no actual albums under his belt? "Hood Politics," from his *Block Obama* mixtape with **DJ Strong** and **Whoop Kid**, makes the case once again. Tackling the beat from M.I.A.'s Clash-sampling "Paper Planes," the ninth letter (who's supposedly dropping an album called *B.O.S.S.* on his own Dynasty label shortly) shows he's not afraid of leftfield production while running through outlaw scenarios with lines like, "Thank God I didn't tell this bitch my real name/Told her I was a junior/She think my name is Little James." Who's the B.O.S.S.?

Shawn Jackson seems like a cool guy. I mean, dude's recent mixtape/podcast is called *Boner Jamz 08*. "Feelin Jack" b/w "Strategies" (Tres) offers a funky introduction to his laid-back Cali stylings. "Strategies," with its ambient, Dilla-esque outro and a cameo from **Gully Simpson**, wins.

Willie Isz is **Khujo** from the **Goodie Mob** and Philly phreak **Jneiro Jarel**. "Georgiavania" (Lex), their maniacal debut single, manages to conjure Busta Rhymes, Gravediggaz, Parliament, and even Soulja Boy, all in one shot. While the pairing of the leftfield producer and a Goodie Mob member is sure to elicit lazy Gnarls Barkley comparisons, don't get it twisted: This is some straight-up hip-hop-no funny wigs included.



Leftfield Guest Reviews:

3 Na Massa

While the members of Brazilian trio 3 Na Massa might traffic in the sounds of sensuality and eroticism with their rarefied brand of bossa nova, Rica Ambis, Pupillo, and Sucinto "Dengue" Silva spread their influences all over the map. The fact that their recent self-titled LP landed on New York's eclectic Nublu label is further testament that there's more to the São Paulo trio than *clave* hits and Tropicalia sensibilities. Sure they're big on vocalists (their record features guests like C&U and Karine Carvalho) but for their guest review picks, they namedrop crooners of a totally different breed. Read on and see what else Ambis is feeling these days. *Taryn Harrington* myspace.com/3namassa

MARTINA TOPLEY-BIRD

"BABY BLUE" FROM *THE BLUE GOD*

Independiente/UK/CD

We have been listening to Martina since Tricky's *Maxinquaye* album, and she always surprises us with her songs-she's always experimenting. *The Blue God* is quite different from her debut LP, *Quixotic*. With a quick listen and a peek at the artwork you sense a Japanese influence and some big pop flavor. "Baby Blue" has a '60s feel-beautiful melody with some great Danger Mouse production. He is always ahead in a way-back kind of way. *Rica Ambis*

JAMIE LIDELL

"LITTLE BIT OF FEEL GOOD"

Warp/UK/12

It's not just Martina who has gone back 40 years in time. Different, but in the same vein as his previous album, Jamie Lidell manages to hit the '60s vibe, but you can still sense that it was produced in the modern day. "Little Bit of Feel Good" sometimes sounds like Stevie Wonder's *Innervisions* but the beatboxing is a dead giveaway that this song is from the future. Still, he knows how to use his influences and doesn't try to hide it. *Rica Ambis*

TURBO TRIO

"T3 MAKE MOVE (YA BODY)"

YB Music/BRA/12

Turbo Trio hails from São Paulo and blurs the line between *funk carioca* and Miami bass. Bregao, Tejo, and Alexandre Basa make beats to move you and lyrics that make you think. The programming is fresh, and the vocals are deep, sometimes reminding me of OutKast. "T3 Make Move (Ya Body)" is what was missing in Brazilian clubs. *Rica Ambis*

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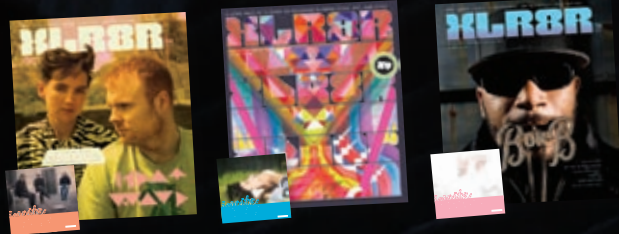
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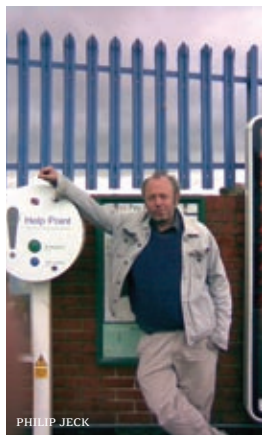


Flying Lotus photographed by Theo Jemison



After Silence By Martin De Leon

THE OUTER ORBITS OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC



PHILIP JECK



SIAN ALICE GROUP



AGNES SZÉLAG

Like Wu-Tang and Zelda before me, I swing an imaginary plastic sword around the apartment. But, I use it to slay boring music in order to bombard you with next-level stuff. So protect ya neck!

Oakland's brilliant electro-acoustic composer **Agnes Szélag** drops gorgeous instrumentals on her EP, *No Summer or Winter* (Aphonia Recordings). She's like Set Fire to Flames-meets-Terry Riley on eerie, slithering cello compositions ("Man-Made Weather") and fragile tone poems processed with software ("Inside and Out). Dark enough for a noir film, this is a gem.

Chop Shop, otherwise known as New York sound artist **Scott Konzelmann**, uses magnetic tape as his sonic Play-Doh. The moody, 49-minute *Oxide* (23 Five) begins as an analog piece of junkyard noise then turns into a ghostly, Merzbow-esque drone collage. Unless your friends are MIT engineering grads, this might not be the best party jam.

Oddly enough, no beats drop on **Ratatat's** latest 7" on XL Recordings, featuring two tracks off their third album. "Shiller" is all prickly organs and big synths that end in pretty guitars, like a Brooklyn version of Air... but better. The b-side, "Mahalo," is prettier, with sunny guitars leading you to an alien beach with crashing ambient waves. I can't wait to hear the album.

British trio **Sian Alice Group** follows last year's *59.59* with more acoustic minimalism on their EP *The Dusk Line* (The Social Registry). On the title track, singer **Sian Ahern** deliciously wails over the pitter-patter of a simple piano. Elsewhere, melancholic keys tickle each other on "October's Piano," like a brainy Iannis Xenakis boogie.

Tomorrow's rock whiz kids live on the label We Are Free, which I championed based on their solid roster of Brooklyn post-hippie band **Yeasayer** and two other bands I first scribbled about in this column: Houston's **Indian Jewelry** and Baltimore's **Ponytail**. Their bench should only get deeper as the year goes on and when I'm bored, I visit their website to not be bored. You should too at nowwearefree.com. Oh, and read more about WAF in this issue's Labels We Love feature.

L.A.'s **Abe Vigoda** is a rock 'n' roll PB&J sandwich. Veterans of rock club The Smell, the quartet uses tropical and jittery rock to make crowds wiggle. Their debut album, *Skeleton* (Past Present Medium), is out this month and should definitely be scooped up. They make Vampire Weekend sound like spoiled Ivy League kids. Oh, wait...

Not spoiled are avant DJ **Philip Jeck** and laptop wiz **Fennesz**, who each take sides on the terrific "Amoroso" 7" on Touch, dedicated to minimalist Estonian composer Arvo Pärt. Using the organ work of Charles Matthews, Fennesz busts out a lush, Enoesque ambient work on side one while Jeck rips the organ into a choppy, noise track. Both make this 7" worth digging up.

Black Mountain Phonographic Music just started a 7" series with Toronto electro group **Kids on TV**. But London crew **Glamour Sound System** steals the show on some Too Short-meets-*Transformers* tip with the nutsa dance banger "Raw Raw Raw."

Wack music lurks like a dragon, so forget going outside—just stay in and put on some headphones. You can always Google "the beach" later.



Bubble Metropolis By ML Tronik

TECHNO: MINIMAL, BANGING, AND BEYOND



RADIO SLAVE (RIGHT)



MINILOGUE PHOTO BY SAID



WAREIKA

We start this month at Montreal's MUTEK 08. My second year attending the fantastic festival was just as good as my first—bad weather notwithstanding. The low-key but "up for it" vibe reminded me of the Sónar fest in the late '90s, and the music was top-notch. **Kode9**, **Radio Slave**, **Chloe**, and **Mossa** were my highlights, reminding me that this festival is a must-attend for all lovers of emerging electronic talent. Start planning for next year's 10th anniversary fest.

One of the most-heard records at MUTEK was **Minilogue's** two-track 10-inch, *Doiicie* (Minilogue). These tunes (one pumping and one dubby, laid-back techno) both feature a strange spoken-word piece about efficient living—something called "D.E." Upon further research, it turns out it's an excerpt from a William S. Burroughs essay, which, considering the subject matter, makes total sense. It's available on vinyl for six months and will then see a digital release. Learn how to beatmatch.

Several months back I heralded a new direction in minimal techno, one that incorporated lots of organic instrumentation. The prime example was **Kreon & Lemos' Lookosphere** EP. Now that instant classic has been remixed on the Resopal Red label. **Wighnomy Bros**, **Art Bleek**, and **Anthony Collins** all take a stab at the clarinet classic, with the Bros' version the strongest of the bunch. Shocking, I know. But buy the digital version because, as was the case with the original, the wax pressing isn't particularly good.

Midtempo, groovy, and electronic. That's a good way to describe **Calculus' Loosey Goosey** (Hairy Claw). This is an acidic little number whose original version clocks in at around 118 bpm. The Reboot remix that accompanies it is more uptempo and much bouncier. Great for techno heads and disco snobs alike.

Also strictly for the techno-disco snobs is **Jim Rivers' "Mirage"** (Simple). All synth-heavy melodic techno should be this good. Crystal clear arpeggios, great stabby chords, very well-constructed and executed music overall. And topping it off is a very nice remix by **Tobias**. Not much to dislike here.

And speaking of Tobias, the man who turned in some of my favorite tracks of 2006 and 2007 has finally returned in 2008 to bring some real heat on *I Can't Fight the Feeling* (Wagon Repair). What I like about this guy is that he gets one idea and just runs with it. The EP starts out on a slightly different tip, as his usual trackiness is augmented by a vocal sample on the title cut, but the remaining three cuts are trademark Tobias club bangers.

If bangers aren't your thing, let **Wareika** take you to a deeper frame of mind. The trio's newest Afro-techno opus is called *Impulse* (Connaissance Recordings). This two-tracker is indeed deep, but it moves forward like a puma in the depths of a damp, jungle night. That sounds corny, but if you listen to either "Impulse" or "Be Real," you might get that feeling.

Felipe Venegas has got the feeling. You can see for yourself on his new release, *De Gama* (Immigrant). Be on the hunt for this one, as it is pure minimal funkiness without the hackneyed sound design. The title track is the shit, but don't miss out on "Pa Bailar Pa Gozar" either for pumpin', jack-time pep.

Also jackin' and crackin' is the newest sampler from the Jackmoves label, *Jackmovers Two* (Jackmoves). These three tracks from **Alex Young**, **David Ekenbach**, and **Ji-Fi** prove the talent of up-and-coming producers out there is steadily improving. My favorite is the Alex Young effort, "Misteria." A lot of you have no idea what a jackmove is. That's a good thing. Be thankful that you have some good music to associate it with now.

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HARDROCK STRIKER

What up, folk! Time to pop the trunk and let you hear what's comin' outta my supersonic kicker boxes! I got plenty of funk 'n' bass fo' yo' face! Certified fresh, no stale jaws here! So adjust your amps, 'cause they so fresh, the worst it'll do is teach you to count by fives to a tweeters!

Damn, it must be the year of the artist-turned-songwriter-turned-artist! **Imani** "Legend of a Cowgirl" **Coppola** is back! After writing a few joints for **Alice Smith's** acclaimed debut, Coppola paired up with instrumentalist **Adam Pallin** to form **Little Jackie**. The result is some dope tongue-in-cheek joints blessed with Coppola's dope harmonizin' skills, as on the narcissistic joint "The World Should Revolve Around Me" (S-Curve).

Likewise, penning the bulk of **Res'** critically acclaimed *How I Do* gave Philly native **Santi White** (a.k.a. **Santogold**) the gusto to release her own mash-up collection of electro-rock-dance-funk tunes on her eponymous debut on Downtown/Lizard King.

Raphael Saadiq is set to drop his third solo album, *The Way I See It* (Pookie/Columbia), real soon, y'all! Saadiq conjures up that quintessential, dusty soul shit that would make even Amy Winehouse do a double-take. And if the cut "Sure Hope You Mean It" don't evoke the spirit of Curtis Mayfield and his mighty Impressions, then ain't *no* hope for soul music!

Meanwhile, **Platinum Pied Pipers** seem like they're trying to jumpstart the Motor City's dormant soul engine with the latest single, "On a Cloud" (Ubiquity), featuring vocalist **Karma Stewart**. This throwback jam knocks with enough brass and tambourines to bring back the watusi and the boogaloo!

Somewhere in a dank basement in Brooklyn, a hodge-podge clique of badass musicians got together to create a funky collection of cuts under the name **The Phenomenal Hand Clap Band**. If the funk jam "15 to 20" (Embassy Sound Productions) don't move you, the worst it'll do is teach you to count by fives to a funky beat.

Word on the street is **John Legend** got some leftfield tricks up his sleeve for his third album! 'Til it drops, feast yo' ears on "Green Light (Ready to Go)" (G.O.O.D./Columbia) featuring the extraterrestrial pimpin' of **Andre 3000**.

Extra! Extra! Following the recent signing of **Lalah Hathaway**, daughter of late soul legend Donny Hathaway, **Nikka Costa** is the latest addition to the roster of the recently revived resting place of down-home soul, Stax Records. Check Lalah's mellow full-length *Self Portrait* and Nikka's funk 'n' souled-out *Pebble to a Pearl!*

Yo, if any of you are huge cynics like me, you're still recuperating from the preposterous allegation that angular southern belle **Janelle Monáe** signed to Diddy's house of bling, Bad Boy Records. Well, the rumor is indeed true! Stay tuned for the release of her debut *Metropolis Suite* this summer!

L.A.-based producer/soul singer **Erik Rico** ain't no stranger to the music biz. Formerly signed to Columbia Records by *American Idol's* Randy Jackson, Rico is now a free man ready to transmit on *A Higher Frequency* (LifeNotes). The five-track EP features his unique brand of futuristic electro-soul that's guaranteed to forge new directions in music!

That's a wrap for me, family! Check me next time for the freshest funk and soul jaws on the face of the earth!

Quantity and quality rarely agree, but every once in a while you hit pay dirt and it seems as if every new single you hear is *the* single. I can't remember the last time I was so wound up about contemporary dance tracks. Maybe it's all hyperbole-maybe I say this every summer-but hot damn, there is a lot of fantastic music right now.

Who better to start with than Mr. **Cosmo Vitelli**? His Paris-based I'm a Cliché label has a slew of great releases currently hittin' the shops, starting with a massive remix 12" of **Bot'ox's** 2007 single "Babylon by Car" (DFA/I'm a Cliché). Vitelli's brand of cinematic, techy disco under his Bot'ox moniker is ripe for twisted treatments, so why not turn to the current kings of noir, **Richard Sen** (of **Padded Cell** acclaim) and **Discodeine?** Also forthcoming on I'm a Cliché, a piping hot 12" by Brooklyn boys **Runaway**. "Puttin' in the Overtime" on the a-side is a spacious, piano-heavy burner, while "Dead Dog Farm" on the flip finds the duo (alongside pal **Brennan Green**) in a dubby, late-night session of live cello, trumpet, and drums. Lastly, for some truly leftfield action, don't sleep on the first full-length offering from the label, a heady and varied affair from French producer **Uncle O**.

Harking back to the dark-disco camp, Sen also makes a contribution to a fine piece of wax from the Portland duo **Hedford Vachal** (Tirk). While "Alan vs. Gary" on the top is all cosmic synths and swooping melodies-Parsons? Numan?-the b-side is where the real action is. "Toys" offers some rolling, droning post-punk and both the original and the Sen remix are first-rate. In a similar vein, the debut EP from London's **Detachments**

(Thisisnotanexit), *Fear No Fear*, showcases a pulsing blend of druggy, industrial disco-not-disco. Remixes come from **Naum Gabo** and **Moscow**.

As usual, there are plenty of notable cuts arriving via and his posse of beardos at Bear Funk. First up is a dub-disco number from Italy's **Fratelli Riviera**. "Riviera's Boogie" is tight-lipped, locked-down Italo with a grimace on its face, but things get *really* dirty on the flip side. **Dean_Meredith** of **Chicken Lips** gives the track a healthy dose of electro with an 808-fueled remix under his **Goat Dance** alias. For a more cosmic getaway, **Arturo Capone** has prepped a three-track sampler for his upcoming debut LP *Miocure* (Bear Funk). The highlight here is **Max Essa's** tasteful Balearic remix of "Waves" on the b-side. It's one long drive home from the beach.

Continuing down the Italo path, Paris' **Hardrock Striker** has reissued two lost '80s Italian pop gems from **Lectric Workers** and **Brand Image** in the latest installment of his Cosmic Club Series. Originals are included, but the re-edits are your real friends here-kitschy, robot dances that'll have you both wiggling and giggling.

And good, great lord, if you buy one single this year, make it the Rekids remix 12" of **Radio Slave's** already epic "Bell Clap Dance." **Simon Baker's** hypnotic, vigorous take on the track is simply in a league of its own. Lastly, in a singles-dominated genre, full-lengths are a typically special occasion, so don't sleep on recently released LPs from **Tussle** and **Lindstrom** (Smalltown Supersound) and **Toby Tobias** (Rekids). All three are superb.



Oddball Dance Guest Reviewer: Greg Wilson

A pioneer of the U.K. dance scene, Greg Wilson started spinning in 1975, breaking the post-disco, electro-funk records that would fertilize the Euro dance revolution. He gained acclaim for DJing at famed venues like the Hacienda in Manchester, and became the first DJ to mix live on British TV in 1983. After taking a two-decade hiatus from DJing, he reemerged to spin at Fabric, Ministry of Sound, and Sub Club, among other notable events and festivals, proving he could still rock a party with his trusty Revox reel-to-reel tape machine. His most recent release, *Greg Wilson's 2020 Vision*, is a mix of his favorite electro-funk cuts from the label's catalog. Hopefully, he'll be spinning the tracks below at a spot near you. [Zoneil Maharaj](#) [electrofunkroots.co.uk](#)

PH EDIT "DON'T LET GO"

Disco Deviance/UK/12
Destined to be one of the hottest re-edits of the summer, "Don't Let Go" was originally released in 1978 by the most unlikely of disco artists, Tony "Tie A Yellow Ribbon Round the Ole Oak Tree" Orlando. Using only the instrumental part of the track, Pete Herbert has given "Don't Let Go" a whole new lease on life 30 years later, making this glorious groove accessible to DJs who wouldn't have previously played the original purely because of the vocal. *Greg Wilson*

FORCE OF NATURE "I-IGHT"

Mule Musiq/JPN/12
"I-Ight" is a relentless instrumental offering, in some ways reminiscent of Gino Soccio's 1979 classic "Dancer." Courtesy of the Tokyo-based duo of KZA and DJ Kent (a.k.a. Force of Nature), who've built up an impressive body of work since their 2002 debut, this is yet another track guaranteed to pick up plenty of DJ support. *Greg Wilson*

FRATELLI RIVIERA "RIVIERA'S BOOGIE"

Bear Funk/UK/12
Steve Kotey's Bear Funk label has built a solid reputation for quality leftfield dance releases since its inception in 2002, and this new single is no exception. Originating in Italy and brought to the label's attention by Bill Brewster, who's championed the track on his Ministry of Sound radio show, "Riviera's Boogie" has all the hallmarks of an underground dance favorite. It's rounded out with a killer remix from Kotey's Chicken Lips comrade, Dean Meredith. *Greg Wilson*

THE SUNBURST BAND "FASHION"

Z/UK/12
Taken from the album *Moving With the Shakers*, DJ Joey Negro's Sunburst Band project unleashes its new single, a cover of David Bowie's 1980 hit "Fashion," which comes in both vocal and dub varieties. The dub, with only a smattering of vocal, is my personal preference, whilst others will favor the full song, delivered in a distinctively soulful style. *Greg Wilson*

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Lucky 13
By Toph One

TophOne spins weekly at the RedWine Social, White Label, Saints & Sinners, and Funkside in San Francisco



PADDED CELL



CADENCE WEAPON

At least my last memory of Otto from our annual SnowCamp weekender back in March is true to form. It had been a typically robust few days of hard partying, loud music, and both indoor and outdoor sports. The big man was a bit gaunt due to chemotherapy, but there he was—always the most gracious host, ready with a handful of party favors and a huge warm hug. From the SummerCamp and SnowCamp weekends benefiting the Girls2000 program in Hunter’s Point to Kiva.org to the Power to the Peaceful Festival and a hundred other events, Otto’s boundless energy and giving nature makes him a never-ending example of a life well lived. And so there we were, the last of the savages, drinking red wine on a crisp Easter morn on a redwood deck at Tahoe. Onward, my brother—you are an inspiration to us all. Forever spreading joy—Otto Schutt, 2008.

1. COPPÉ FI-LAMENTÉ

Mango Sweet Rice/JPN/CD
Perfect music for an afternoon of planting succulents on the foggy hillsides of Twin Peaks! Just add wine and a little fungus and you’ve got yourself a time. Coppé is an odd and delicious little nymph making fun, bubbly music for the aforementioned activities.

2. COSMIC ROCKER ACTION BREAKS EP

Black Bridge/US/download
All the jazzy, organic, and electro-funk breaks and beats we’ve come to expect from Codek’s Sasa Crnobrnja, only this time for Boulder’s Black Bridge label. Lovely and infinitely rockable, but where’s the vinyl!

3. TRAIN ON THE BRAIN

MJW Productions/CAN/DVD
Gutter punks and old hobos and yard bulls and nudity amidst America’s rolling stock of freight trains? Sounds good to me!

4. 60HZ FEATURING CE’CILE “BAD GIRL”

Ninja Tune/UK/7
Throbbing, spaghetti-Western ragga riddim for Ce’Cile to make pretty over. For the dancefloor, but with a sinister edge.

5. CHICO MANN ANALOG DRIFT

demo/US/CD
Laid back, Afro-Latin goodness from this Antibalas side-project of sorts. Loungy, languid summertime tunes for outdoor dining or rooftop cocktails. *Niiice.*

6. DE LEON DE LEON

J-Dub/US/CD
From the same cultural blender that gave us Gogol Bordello and Dengue Fever comes the Spanish/Jewish/Brooklyn mash that is Daniel Saks’ visionary band De Leon. At times rocking the Casbah (“La Serena”), sometimes channeling David Byrne (“Almond Trees”), and sometimes just wonderfully weird (“La Vida Do Por El Raki”), this is one band to behold.

7. SPACE FUNGHI PROJECT “ELEKTRIK PSILOSYPBE EXPERIENCE”

3*60/US/download
Another one for Otto. Weird, psych-jazz-funk freak-out music for veteran astronauts. A little bit cosmic lounge, a little bit nutter fandango—it’s like spending 24 hours with our dear friend!

8. CADENCE WEAPON AFTERPARTY BABIES

Anti/US/2xLP
It’s like Top’R rhyming over club bangers! “Tattoos” and “House Music” are the bombs, but there’s plenty more to keep you interested from this Canadian wordsmith.

9. PADDED CELL “WORD OF MOUTH”

DC/UK/12
This was already a standout track from the *Night Must Fall* LP, but now with the Glimmers’ *Disko Drunkards* Dub aimed squarely at the dirtiest of late-night dancefloors, it’s worth another listen.

10. AZEEM AIR CARTOONS

Oaklyn/US/CD
There aren’t too many MCs of Azeem’s stature who would fuck with new-school beatmakers like Bassnectar and DJ Aneurysm—and even fewer who are dope enough to make the pairings succeed. Also in the house are Meat Beat Manifesto, DJ Zeph, DNAE Beats, and a pair of gems by DJ Spin. Wicked good.

11. SOUTH RAKKAS CREW “MAD AGAIN (REMIXES)”

Mad Decent/US/12
Oh, the kids like it hard! Boy 8-Bit, Fake Blood, and Drop the Lime push the bpm’s and the acid-fuzz for the full warehouse sound. Is electro-ragga a genre yet? Does it need to be? Just enjoy.

12. VARIOUS ARTISTS TRIED TO GIVE A DAMN, COULDN’T GIVE A SHIT

promo/US/CD
From the fine folks at Compression SF comes a heavyweight drum & bass mix featuring Aye’N and The Colonel MC. Fast and hard is how they bring it, and they do it well. Worth tracking down for the cover photo by merklej??? alone.

LUCKY 13. LITTLE ZERO

US/t-shirt line
City bikers, DJs, and designers Emdee and Steve “Ramblin Worker” MacDonald have created some fine tees for the funky peeps and connoisseurs of the art form. You probably need the 3-D Bike and the Exploding Alphabet varieties. I know I do.

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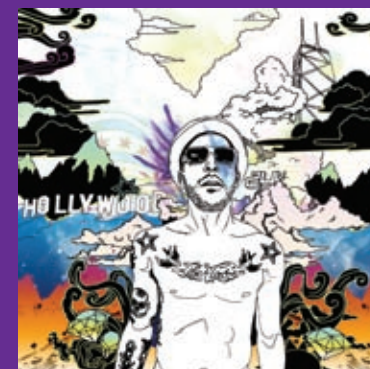
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DASECA (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT): SERANI (IN BOOTH), DAVID, AND CRAIG (SEATED).

IN THE STUDIO: DASECA

Three young Jamaican dancehall producers storm international charts with a fresh roster and new-school riddims. WORDS: TOMAS PALERMO PHOTO: MARTEI KORLEY

Brothers David and Craig Harrisingh and their friend and musical partner Craig "Serani" Marsh combined letters from their respective names and dubbed their dancehall production studio Daseca (for David-Serani-Craig). Located on Red Hills Road in Kingston, Jamaica, Daseca has quickly established a radio, club, and chart presence by producing hits for Mavado ("Dying"), Busy Signal ("These Are the Days"), and their signature artist Bugle ("Doh"). But the trio has resisted categorization, adding hip-hop, R&B, and even techno influences to their original Jamaican sound. Now, as Serani and Bugle tunes rule the international charts and bigger deals loom with American major labels, the crew says they're not in a rush to bust out big, but instead seek to organically build their brand. Oh, and they want to make another thing clear: They don't use AutoTune or samples! *XLBR* caught up with Craig Harrisingh to get the lowdown on Daseca's methodology.

XLBR: Where is your studio located?

Craig Harrisingh: It's in a plaza, with lots of shops in there. We share a vocal booth with another studio in the same building run by Razz and Biggie from Bembe Squad.

What are the crew members' different roles?

Everybody does everything, basically. We share the work. Even if just one or two of us builds a beat or a riddim, everyone gets credit as Daseca.

How did you come up with the Airwaves riddim?

We build most of [soundsystem owner and producer] Fire Links' riddims, [including] Chaka Chaka, Clear, Drumlane, and others. We and Links have a good vibe and a good chemistry. Serani was in the studio and [Airwaves] just happened, it was a natural vibe. We were just playing the keyboards and played a lead riff and Links just say, "I need that!" But we're not really juggling riddims anymore; we're concentrating on producing individual singles.

Do you consider your output to be strictly dancehall?

We're doing music for the whole world. It's still dancehall music 'cause it's coming from Jamaica. Some people say there's hip-hop in [what we do], but we're not trying to build hip-hop, it's just the vibe that we're working from. And it is excellent that dancehall is embracing different beats and tempos. We need that. We're listening to producers like Neptunes, Swizz Beats, and Dr. Dre, but at the same time we're listening to dancehall producers like Dave Kelly, Jeremy Harding, Sly & Robbie, and all that—those are people we look up to.

What's the vibe in the studio?

From day one it's a good vibe 'cause [Daseca] is based on a friendship. We enjoy what we're doing. All of us have the same goal and vision. There's no individual goals. So when Serani break through, it's Daseca; when Bugle do well, it's Daseca.

What are your essential pieces of studio equipment?

Definitely Nuendo running on a PC. We use keyboards to build all the beats including the Korg Triton workstation, Roland Fantom, Yamaha Motif, and we just started using Propellerheads Reason 3. Sometimes we bring in live instruments to add to tracks, but most times it's just the keyboards. We've been doing good with Nuendo, but we're going to eventually get Pro Tools because it's the industry standard. If we ever cross over and Jay-Z sends us vocals, it's gonna be a Pro Tools file.

How do you feel about being a mostly computer-based studio?

That's how most, if not all, studios are right now. But we don't do any sampling. We don't use AutoTune. The only time we used it was when Serani did the hook for "Dying" with Mavado. We wanted his voice to sound like a sample. But Serani as an artist and us as producers, we're not into using AutoTune. Recently we did a producer contest with the *Jamaican Star* newspaper where we picked the winner. And there were some good songs in there but, like, every track had AutoTune. It's an excellent effect, y'know, but it's overdone.

What are Daseca's future goals?

The main focus is Serani and Bugle as artists, and Daseca as a production team. But we're just taking our time, trying to make good music. We want to cross over and do American music, soca, Jamaican music—we even have some alternative rock beats, techno. We have everything. We just did a track with Mavado called "Don't Worry," and [one with] Bugle and Mavado called "Set Me Free" and a whole heap of stuff with Bugle.

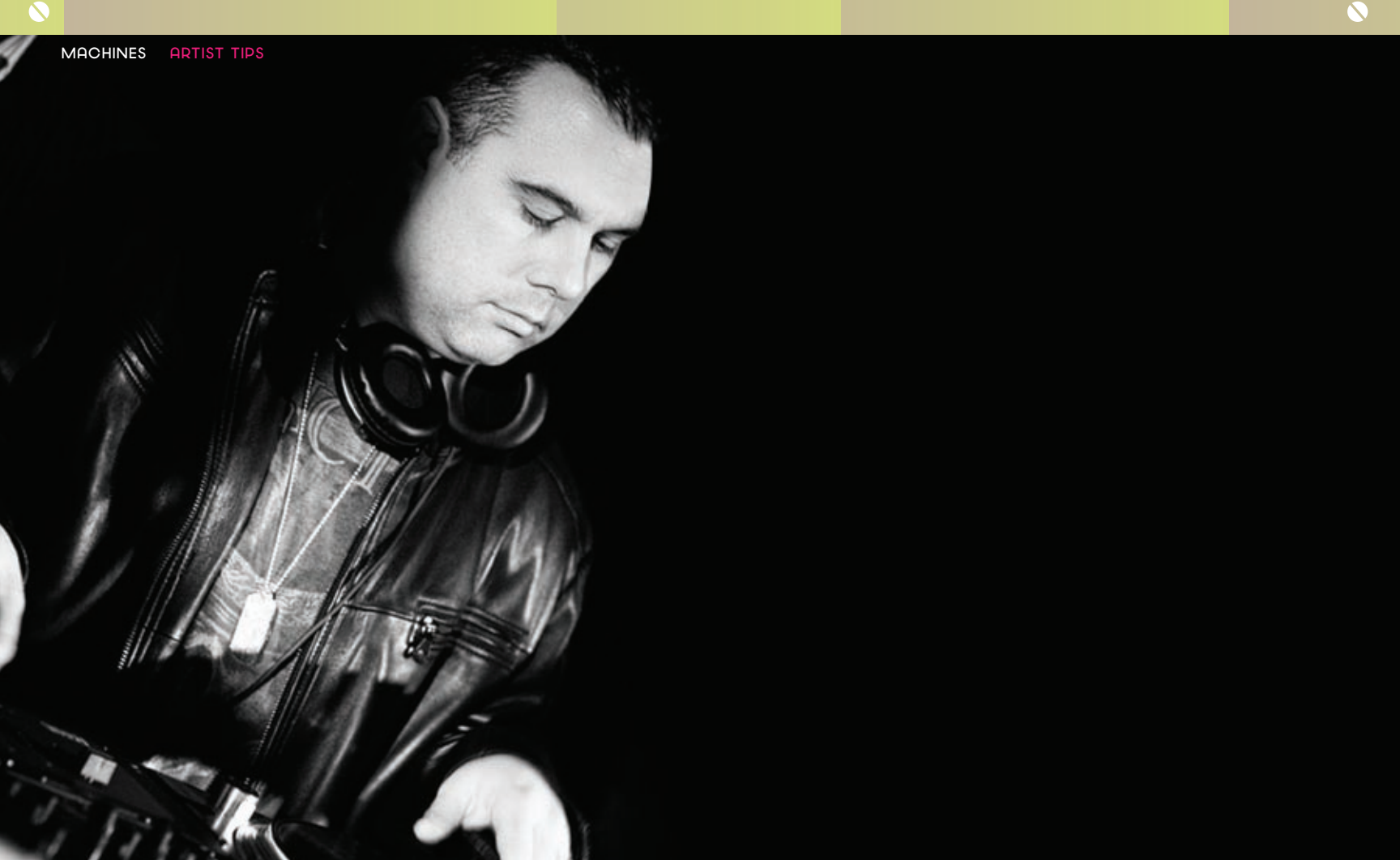
How do you keep the equipment cool?

The studio is definitely air-conditioned. Every studio should be.

Hear more Daseca music including new Mavado, Junior Reid, and Bugle tracks at myspace.com/daseca.



IN DASECA'S STUDIO, ROLAND FANTOM-G8 SYNTHESIZER, PROPELLERHEADS REASON, AND NUENDO



ARTIST TIPS: DJ GODFATHER

Detroit ghettech master DJ Godfather (a.k.a. Brian Jeffries) is a DJ's DJ, so when he made the switch to Serato Scratch LIVE, he no doubt convinced more than a few others to follow suit. Rane's innovative hardware/software DJ package enables DJs to kiss goodbye their heavy vinyl stacks (for better or worse, we know), and jump right into the mix with a pretty simple DJ setup. The user's laptop hooks up to a mixer via USB and two turntables or CD players (playing the system's time-coded vinyl or CDs) manipulate the performer's digital-audio files.

Godfather's *The Detroit Connection Pt.3: For the Freaks*, concocted earlier this year as the first commercial release mixed with Scratch LIVE, packs 66 digital tracks into a seamless ghetto-tech mix that never loses a beat and never, ever slows down. The tracks' immediacy and brevity evoke images of a sweat-drenched Jeffries frantically throwing records on his decks from piles of vinyl, but all it took was a laptop and a couple of turntables. He gave us a few pointers on how to keep our Scratch LIVE game tight. *Cameron Macdonald*

1. SET YOUR CUE POINTS EARLY

Always set up a cue point at the beginning of each track for fast loading. Then, in the setup, click the option that allows you to load the track at the first cue point. You should do this if you mix your records really fast like me. It helps load the track at the exact point at the exact second. You can almost punch the track in on time.

2. SET THE BPMs

This is also good for mixing your records fast. It puts everything in order by bpm so you know right away what songs will mix perfectly in speed with each other. I used to organize my record crates that way, too.

3. PRE-BUILD YOUR OVERVIEWS

Making sure your overviews are always built avoids the computer doing it while you are playing the track. It will free the computer's CPU up a little more and won't lag in the middle of a high-powered set.

4. LEARN THE RANE TTM 57 SERATO MIXER

It takes DJing with Serato to a new level. You can set the mixer up to do anything you want, which can make your set more creative. There is a list of options you can choose for each button so you can map your own little tricks with the mixer.

5. USE THE INSTANT DOUBLE FEATURE

The Instant Double is good for beat-juggling and other things. It locks the same track together on both turntables, if you're at the same pitch in each table. I use it if I want to do a scratch echo, then I'll hit the Instant Double button on my mixer and it locks the tracks on both turntables again.

The Detroit Connection Pt. 3: For the Freaks is out now on Matrix Music.

djgodfather.com, serato.com



PRODUCTION UNLIMITED

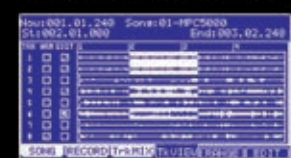
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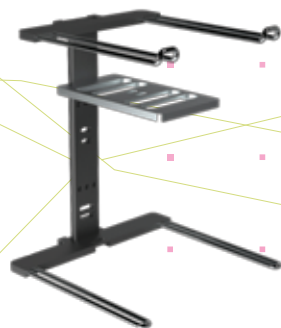
OPTIONS FOR DAYS

BEHRINGER DDM4000 DIGITAL DJ MIXER

Take a quick glance at Behringer's DDM4000 and one thing becomes very, very clear: This is not a device for the faint of heart. Behringer's new flagship digital DJ mixer is an intimidating beast of a machine, and includes more bells and whistles than Barnum and Bailey's private storage unit. There's a beat-synched sampler, four multi-FX sections (bitcrusher, resonator, reverb, etc.), two simultaneous bpm counters, and a MIDI out to control your digital instrument of choice (it comes with a copy of Tractor LE, if that's how you roll). The four phono/line stereo channels allow you to connect every audio source you own, and there are even two microphone inputs for your MC duo. It has programmable parametric three-band EQs along with fader curve control—which, along with the effects, can be applied to any individual channel. Oh, and the sampler has a beat-controlled loop function, real-time pitch control, and sampler FX. Whew.

But while all of the features are great to have, there are some issues: It's tough to figure out how to use some of them (the sampler in particular), and the unit is so crammed full of buttons that the simplest slip of a finger could throw your mix into train-wreck, clusterfuck city. The poorly placed headphone jack, lackluster crossfader, and mediocre overall construction don't sit too well either. Still, it's got nearly everything you could ask for in terms of options: If you're willing to invest the time to learn your way around the interface (and come to terms with the fact that if you want to use it out, you'll have to bring it with you—don't expect it to become standard-issue in clubs), you won't find a DJ mixer with this many features costing this few dollars anytime soon. *Evan Shamoon*

MSRP: \$439.99; behringer.com



STANTON UBERSTAND LAPTOP PERFORMANCE STAND

The Uberstand elegantly addresses performance-space problems by lifting your laptop above your turntables/samplers/drum machines/turkey sandwich, saving space and providing better access to your laptop. The unit is constructed of high-quality "aircraft grade" aluminum and stainless steel (which should make it pretty convenient if you ever decide to fly it home), and the adjustable shelf is perfect for holding your audio interface or hard drive. It's not the prettiest thing ever, and \$100 might feel like a lot for a stand, even if it's of the "uber" variety. But as you may have already discovered, **finding or building something this useful for this purpose is actually waaay more difficult than it seems.** Bonus: It's super-lightweight and folds flat, fitting into its included 12" zippered bag. Bonus irony: This means it's super-easy to transport in your record bag—which you no longer need now that you're a digital DJ. *Evan Shamoon*
MSRP: \$99; stanton.com



EAST WEST QUANTUM LEAP PIANOS SOFTWARE SYNTH

Pianos is one of the most all-encompassing packages that East West's Quantum Leap collection has to offer. With four separate acoustic piano simulations (of the Bechstein D-280, Steinway D, Bosendorfer 290, and Yamaha C7) and 260 GB worth of samples, this collection will have any producer pushing his or her studio into ivory-tinkling overdrive. In addition to detailed velocity sensitivity (10 to 16 levels per note), each piano comes equipped with profoundly realistic pedal resonance, staccato, sustain, and repetition features for maximum realism. While you have to use one of those annoying iLok USB keys and presumably a separate harddrive for the mountain of space this package takes up, **you can't beat this comprehensive library of the finest piano sounds this side of Abbey Road Studios.** *Fred Miketa*
MSRP: \$499; eastwestsamples.com



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YAMAHA RH10MS PROFESSIONAL MONITOR HEADPHONES

Yamaha's reasonably priced RH10MS professional monitor headphones are in a league of their own. Employing S-Logic technology (which you're probably used to experiencing in Ultrasone's cans), these heavyweights are designed to supply sound *around* the head rather than going straight into the ear canal like traditional phones. No need for artificial echo; this set uses your ear's natural acoustics to complete the sound. Packaged with a thick three-meter cord for extreme manoeuvre-ability and a sick velour—yes, velour—pouch, Yamaha's newest addition to its headphone family is **as ideal for studio production as it is for canceling out crying babies** while looking like total badass on your business trips. *Fred Miketa*
MSRP: \$159; yamaha.com



REASON 4 IGNITE!: THE VISUAL GUIDE FOR NEW USERS TUTORIAL BOOK

As a devoted Propellerheads Reason 3 user, I was surprised at how different the fourth edition is. Surprised and dismayed, as many simple commands and editing actions have radically changed, requiring in-depth instruction on the program's new workflow. I had hoped that Matt Piper's *Reason 4 Ignite!* would offer guidance via its step-by-step walk-through of Reason basics and its new devices, but it falls short on creative tips. An experienced Reason user can skip the initial chapters and instead read how-tos on tweaking the new Thor synth's filters and oscillators or the ReGroove device's patches and slide control. Sections on the Combinator and Maelstrom instruments are also thorough. **But with new YouTube video tutorials by fans and experts popping up all the time, *Ignite!* already seems outdated.**
Tomas Palermo
MSRP: \$24.99; courseptr.com



NUMARK TTI USB TURNTABLE WITH IPOD

Like the monolith standing tall among rocks and apes in *2001*, the Numark TTI takes something ancient and familiar—a pitch-controlled, belt-driven turntable ideal for starting DJs—and slaps an artifact of the future right on it. In the TTI's case, it's an integrated iPod dock, handily located on a corner of the deck's chassis. Pop in an iPod or nano, directly transfer all your new 12-inches to MP3, and work out a tracklist for your new mix on the train the next morning. Then when you stumble on that massive garage sale of vinyl, use the standard USB to pump audio into the included PC and Mac software for cleanup and archiving—**and feel free to fling your records around like a crazed monkey afterward!** *Rob Geary*
MSRP: \$449; numark.com



SCANDYNA DROP SPEAKERS

Offering clean headroom for an expressive living room, these slightly and spritely sealed speakers are geared toward moderately sized executive suites or 5.1 arrays. These two-way satellites fall between the company's Micropod and Minipod lines, offering a five-inch Kevlar mid-bass driver and a one-inch fabric dome tweeter in a striking spectrum of ABS enclosures. Playing a smattering of Super Audio, DVD-Audio, and DTS 96/24 from an Oppo Digital DV-980H transport powered off an Integra DTR-7.8 receiver, **the Drops pushed air and airiness**, offering lively response and a relatively unobstructed, uncolored sound field. Compared to the ported Minipod and Cinepod, however, the 10-100 watts-rated Drops (with a response of 50Hz-22kHz, 89dB SPL, 4 ohm) offer a bit less rounded range. But with their curvaceous look and plentiful shelf/wall/ceiling-mounting options, the Drops provides ample enticement.
Tony Ware
MSRP: \$849/pair; podspeakers.com

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NO CONSOLES FOR OLD MEN

A one-console solution? A no-console solution? The future of game delivery remains untold.

WORDS RYAN RAYHILL ILLUSTRATION BY MARK BARTLING

When you were younger, did you have an Atari or a ColecoVision? A Nintendo Entertainment or a Sega Master System? You almost certainly didn't have both of whatever was big at the time (and if you did, we hate you). And as much as you loved and bragged about your system of choice's graphical prowess and superior library of hits, from *River Raid* to *Sonic the Hedgehog*, deep down there were games on the other system that you would have killed for. Money (likely your parents') was the probable reason that you were denied entry into gaming Nirvana back then, but on some level it was fun to pick a side.

Dozens of systems have come and gone since those days and owning multiple systems is now commonplace. However, many of today's "must have" games—the main reason to own any system, no matter what the marketing department tells you—appear on a couple, if not all, of the major consoles. Fewer titles are exclusive to one system, leading many consumers to ask the question: Why do we need them all?

And game buyers aren't the only ones asking that question. As games often take several years and millions of dollars to create—with dozens, if not hundreds, of team members toiling long hours to

finish the job on multiple platforms—some developers are also looking to a "one-standard" solution.

"We have it with DVD, we had it with VHS. We have it with televisions (in the sense that, for the most part, every TV is capable of broadcasting the same signal)," wrote *God of War* creator David Jaffe on his blog. "So what do we lose by having it for game consoles?"

What would this accomplish? Developing costs would diminish significantly with one standard platform, the time it takes to create games would be expedited, and the price of the "all-in-one" hardware could also go down. Most importantly, with developers able to focus their resources on only one system type, the quality of titles could improve dramatically.

With the success of online content-delivery platforms from console makers like Xbox Live Arcade, WiiWare and the PlayStation Store as well as PC platforms like GameTap and Valve's popular Steam, even software manufacturing has come under scrutiny. Why pay millions to make discs, instruction manuals, and cases when you can just pump games direct to homes through the interweb, passing the savings on to everyone?

So, yes, in an ideal world we would all be getting more for less and it's clearly possible. But even if it could happen, would today's aficionados really be satisfied? Many gamers still take great pleasure in picking sides and general "mine is better than yours" fanboy-ism. It's a fruitless and ultimately silly argument, but the reality is that these are the people that have helped establish the industry—they can't be ignored in favor of the recent influx of "casual gamers" who spend large amounts of money on crap games, ultimately hurting the legitimacy of the entire industry.

The biggest hurdle, however, is the console manufacturers themselves. Nintendo, Microsoft, and Sony have proven over and over again that they are willing to lose billions in an effort to become the primary source of all your entertainment needs and to establish who is swinging the biggest grapes.

So while many believe the "one-console" future is inevitable, until the industry as a whole shifts its priorities (and egos) it's still, for now, just an awesome dream.



XL88R's prototype master console of the future



loading...

XLR8R picks the hottest videogames and gear of the month.

WORDS RYAN RAYHILL



Summer is usually slim pickings for videogames but if you like hot griddles, breakdancing, and Japanese farmers then walk this way...

Poor Steven Tyler may be spending the summer in "foot rehab," but that doesn't mean you have to be *sans* the Toxic Twins for long. **Guitar Hero: Aerosmith** (Activision; Xbox 360, PS3, PS2, Wii) lets you take on the role of Joe Perry as you follow the career of the somewhat-not-dead blues rockers from their first high-school gig in 1970 to the druggy Max's Kansas City days all the way up to their 2001 Super Bowl gig. It's not just all Aerosmith, though. Other acts featured in the setlist: The New York Dolls, The Cult, and, naturally, Run-DMC. Cacacacooow!

The weather may be great, but why stand outside and grill in the hot sun for drunk, unappreciative jerks when you can fire up the Wii and serve virtual unappreciative jerks in your own home! **Order Up!** (Zoo; Wii) is a deliciously (groan) fun take on cooking games that has you running your own kitchen. Starting off at greasy spoons you eventually work your way up to five-star French cuisine, using the Wii-mote to dish up everything from fries to rack of lamb in this comic ode to fine dining. Think of it as the bizarre *Hell's Kitchen*.

The DS has proven to be an awesome platform on which new life can be blown into old classics, a prime example of which is this month's 3D remake of **Final Fantasy IV** (Square Enix). Confusingly, the game was originally known as *Final Fantasy II* when it was first released in the States in 1991. And not only did it introduce several features that would become staples in the long-running RPG series, it was also the first videogame storyline to bring a tear to gamers' eyes. Not ours, of course... (sniff).

Think your toprock is ballin'? Does your freeze get the birds hot and bothered? Take your best dance skillz from the streets to your crib in **B-Boy** (South Peak; PS2, PSP), earning some green and, more importantly, the respect of breakers around the world. Already huge in the U.K., *B-Boy* is hosted by renowned dancer Crazy Legs and features tracks from everyone from Cypress Hill to Eric B & Rakim.

As far as addictive simulation games dripping with Japanese cutesiness go, the *Harvest Moon* series is at the top of the big-eyed heap. In the latest in the series, **Harvest Moon: Island of Happiness** (Natsume; DS), you play a young farmer stranded on a desert island. You must help the only other people on the island (a family of four) bring civilization, by

way of agriculture, to the barren land. Eventually a town will spring up around your efforts and you will even be offered a chance to marry one of the townsfolk once you have reached BMOC status. Despite the recent popularity of polygamy, you unfortunately only get one shot.

Okay, enough with the nerd stuff—on to sports! **NCAA Football '09** (EA; Xbox 360, PS3, PS2, PSP, Wii) delivers all the faux fun and excitement of college football and actually makes it fun and exciting! Several new additions have been brought to the field this season such as four-player co-op, home-field advantage, online file-sharing, and interactive end-zone celebrations. See? No under-the-table monies, hot cheerleader tail, or painful skin branding—much more fun than the real thing.

If jock itch and getting impaled by large men aren't on your agenda, then let's talk about **We Love Golf!** (Capcom; Wii). This cartoony golf title is deceptively spot-on as you swing the Wii-mote like Tiger at Augusta. (Or drunk ad sales guys outside the 19th hole.) Except, of course, here you'll be dressed like Chun Li from *Street Fighter*, Jill from *Resident Evil*, or any number of Capcom-themed characters. Then again, so might the ad sales guys. They're a wacky bunch!

1. WE LOVE GOLF!
2. ORDER UP!
3. NCAA FOOTBALL '09
4. GUITAR HERO: AEROSMITH

Catch the weekly Loading... column at XLR8R.com/news.



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VIS-ED

Brian Roettinger

An L.A. punk wears his heart on his sleeve, and all white on Wednesdays.



left: Brian Roettinger exclusive for XLR8R, 2008

Though it sounds sweet and innocent, the name Hand Held Heart is a literal interpretation of a gruesome H.R. Giger painting used as brutal album art by grindcore legends Carcass. It's an apt name choice for L.A.-based designer Brian Roettinger, whose work can be heartfelt, hardcore, and everything in between.

Roettinger started Hand Held Heart in 1998 to release a 7" by screamo luminaries Orchid. The project quickly expanded to include a wealth of unexpected endeavors, like silk-screened album art, redesigning public signage, and music, among other things. "When I came up with the name Hand Held Heart, I realized that it wasn't always going to just be a record label," he explains. "I thought that having a title or a moniker would be nice to have as the platform for anything I make. Whatever my interests are, it falls under that."

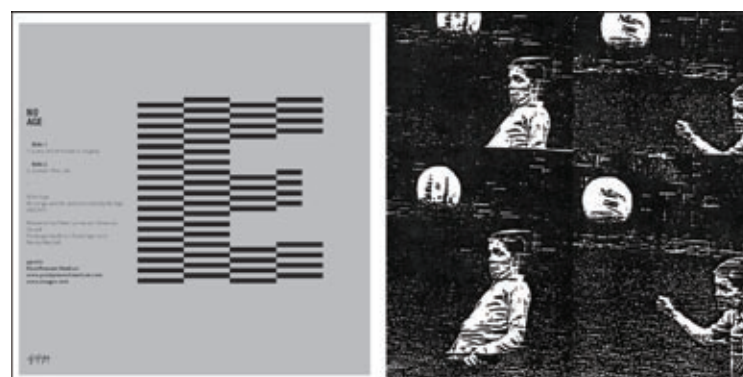
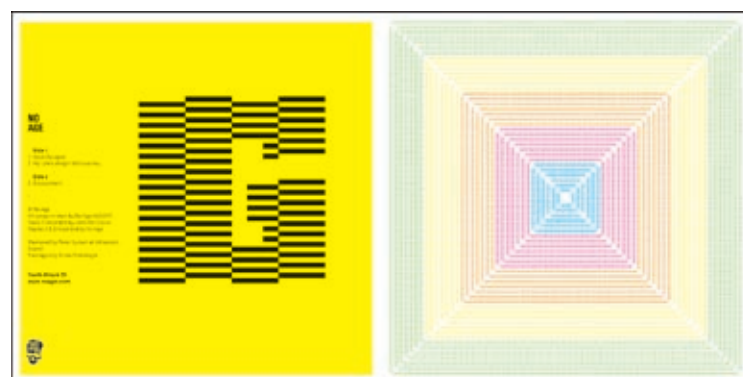
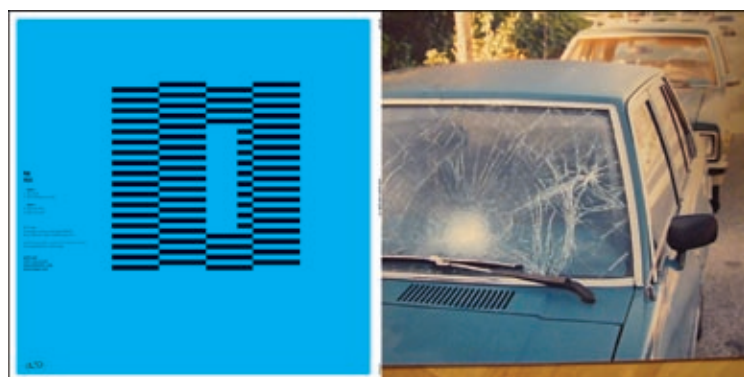
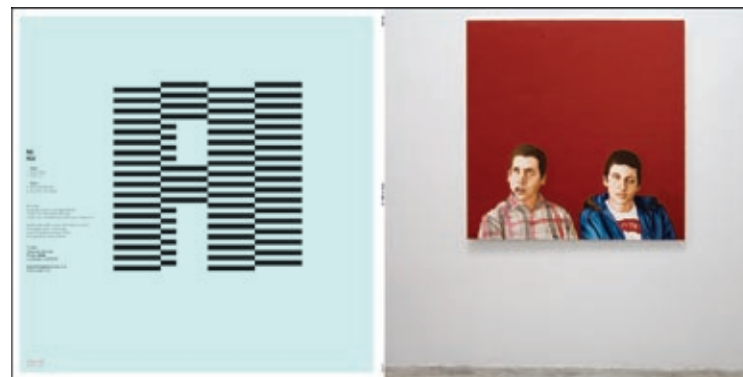
Maintaining a day job as the art director for the Southern California Institute of Architecture, Roettinger's attention to detailed lines and choice fonts has crossed over into his design work for friends like No Age and Liars; similarly, his unique ability to balance financial stability with community-oriented output stems from his punk roots. In the late '90s, Roettinger was the bassist for This Machine Kills, a Southern California hardcore fixture that featured Steve Aoki on vocals.

"You really felt like you were a part of something important, and you were involved and responsible in every aspect of your endeavors, whether it was booking shows, making t-shirts, or releasing records," says Roettinger of the DIY movement's lasting impact. "It's a very self-reliant, skill-sharing community. That's the primary quality that still influences my work and how I live my life today."

Brian Roettinger has an exhibit at Echo Park's Hope Gallery this month. handheldheart.com

...it would have afforded me the widest range of expression.
— Henry Miller

Brian Roettinger, Hand Held Heart 2008
www.handheldheart.com



above.
No Age 5"
single series

How would you describe Hand Held Heart?

It's about collaboration not competition. It's about staying up late. It's about communication. It's about getting pissed. It's about thinking critically. It's about not taking yourself too seriously. It's about getting your hands dirty then washing them. It's about listening to what others have to say. It's about supporting what your friends are doing. One day it may be about something else.

How did you first become interested in art?

As a kid, and still to this day, I was excessively eager and curious for just about

everything around me. My grandfather was a clockmaker, my father was an avid photographer and illustrator, and my mother painted. Me, I would break things, fix things, steal things, return things, take things apart, and basically get myself into trouble. I would ask a lot of questions: "How did you make that?" "What is this?" "Can I make one of those?" I was a dreamer, and ultimately just started making things, mostly drawings, at home and in school.

What did you learn in your four years at the California Institute of the Arts?

I know this will sound very academic, but it taught me to listen, distinguish sense from

nonsense, and how to think critically and develop ideas. By the time I was finished, I was very aware of what I did and didn't want to do with design.

Describe your artistic process from start to finish.

I learned this from the Dutch designer Hans Gremmen: 1) Do one thing at a time (which I have a hard time doing). 2) Know the problem. 3) Learn to listen. 4) Learn to ask questions. 5) Distinguish sense from nonsense. 6) Accept change as inevitable. 7) Admit mistakes. 8) Say it simple. 9) Be calm. 10) Smile.

above.
Blood Brothers / Liar split
7" sleeve



above and right:
posters for the
Southern California
Institute of Architecture

How do you know when you've finished a piece?

I try not to over-analyze but when there is absolutely, positively no more time left to continue working then I am done, and if there is no more time and I feel it's not complete, well, then it's going to be late. I think the more things you make, the more comfortable you are with your work and knowing when something feels right or feels done. It's not always that it looks done, but that it just feels done.

What does a day in your life look like?

I rarely eat breakfast. I spend about an hour

in the morning reading and responding to emails. I spend most of my day at Southern California Institute of Architecture, either working on the current publication or a new series of public-program posters. I drink a lot of green tea. I try to never wear the same shoes two days in a row. I eat a late lunch. I wear all white on Wednesdays. I sometimes wear a suit on Friday (formal Fridays). I have so many projects that my days range based on what I am working on, but it often includes getting frustrated, confused, excited, and tired.

What is a classic album cover that you would re-design if you could?

David Bowie's *Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders From Mars*. I like the existing design, but it's something that I wouldn't mind seeing with a solely typographic solution.

What's your favorite album cover of all time?

There are so many I could call favorites, but *The Day the Country Died* by The Subhumans was the first punk record I remember buying because I loved the cover, so it's a bit nostalgic.

What do you like to listen to while you work?

Animal Collective, Panda Bear, No Age, Liars, Glenn Branca, The Ramones, Mötley Crüe, AC/DC, Shotmaker. Sometimes I just listen to sports radio.

Who do you consider your influences, artistic or otherwise?

The early 20th century avant-garde for their experimental and innovative respect to art, culture, and politics. Ian Curtis for his musical and lyrical vision. William S. Burroughs for his words and social criticism. Robert Brownjohn for his wit and conceptual approach to design. Charles and Ray Eames for their timeless, simple, and brilliant approach to thinking.

Dieter Roth for the fact that he never seemed to stop working, and finally John Cassavetes—the true DIY thinker.

What would you be doing if you weren't an artist?

I would probably be doing something else and trying to pass it off as art.

Do you still play music?

Occasionally Aaron Hemphill from Liars and I will collaborate and make tracks. We have a few hours' worth of material that we never do anything with.

How do you stay financially secure without compromising your DIY ethics?

I try to stick strictly to arts-related cultural organizations or institutes. Most of the stuff has been for smaller galleries or museums and bigger publishers, but no real large corporate stuff. Right when I was out of school, I worked for Motorola and I couldn't hang, really. It was hard to come up with ideas and make things. You have these great ideas, and they're like, 'That's great, but we're not gonna make that yet. Let's just put that to the side, and maybe we'll use it in the future.' It just seemed like a waste of my time.

TBC

File Under: Forward

Voluntary collective licensing proposes an alternate solution to the RIAA's crackdown on file-sharing.

Words **Matt Earp**
Illustration **Saputotime**



“Pre-settlement” letters to shake down file-sharers to the tune of \$3000 a piece. Suing more than 30,000 file-sharers since 2004. Taking Napster and Grokster to the Supreme Court. Lobbying to introduce a bill (HR 4137) that would require universities to investigate “technology-based deterrents” to file-sharing, and tie their access to federal funding for student loans to their willingness to comply. Sometimes the actions of the RIAA, the major record labels’ trade association, seem as draconian as they do futile.

Despite countless attempts to legislate its end, file-sharing still thrives today. Bit Torrent transfers account for a huge amount of internet traffic and networks like SoulSeek and the reborn Oink (now Waffles.fm) carry music back and forth between music fans at an astonishing rate. The RIAA knows this, but has failed to come up with a model to compensate artists and its labels, and to deal fairly with those file-sharing consumers.

But there is a solution to turn file-sharing from a loss of control into a legitimate business, creating a revenue source for artists and an almost limitless resource for consumers, and it’s a fairly simple one: Collect a small monthly fee from system users (\$5

a month is a number often cited) through a service they already use, such as their ISP or a student’s dorm fees. Users could download as much as they want, using whichever system they want, knowing that they’ve paid for the use of the system (much like paying for cable TV). The movement of files would be tracked through the system in a way that is accurate but still respectful of users’ privacy. And a portion of the money would be redistributed to rights holders based on download rates.

The proposal has been around for years, starting with Harvard Law Professor Terry Fisher’s book *Promises to Keep* in 2004. It has been updated by the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) since then and I’ve been fortunate to work with them on the idea, called Voluntary Collective Licensing, since last summer. The plan received further interest this spring when Warner Music announced it had hired digital-music industry veteran Jim Griffin to explore the possibility of implementing such a system.

There are many questions left to be answered about how such a system would work, some with fairly easy answers: Companies like Big Champaign are already able to track P2P users with a variety of

methods, and any business school student would jump at the chance to write a new business plan to get artists paid from file-sharing. Such upheavals and new models come along every time a new disruptive technology emerges (like gramophones and radios and cassette players). The more difficult question is: How to create a system that’s fair for everyone? Anything will ultimately have to be okayed by the RIAA—and let’s face it, they don’t have the best track record.

However it happens, there is little doubt that sometime in the next 10 years—and maybe as soon as the next couple—digital music and music ownership in general will become less like a commodity and more like a utility that you simply turn on. Sites like imeem.com already function this way and have secured licensing deals with major labels to do so. When file-sharing follows suit in a way that is fair for artists and their supporters, we can move forward in a fair and equitable manner for all.

For a simple read on the proposal for Voluntary Collective Licensing, see the EFF’s “A Better Way Forward” white paper at eff.org.

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